

**City of Graham  
City Council Meeting Agenda  
February 10, 2026**



**6:00 p.m. | City Hall | 201 South Main Street | Graham, NC**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Chelsea Dickey

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Dr. Derrick Thorpe, Senior Pastor at First Baptist Missionary Church

**PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITION:**

- Grace VandeVisser, Alamance County Convention and Visitors Bureau - Season Six - The Story of Art in America.
- 9/11 5K Fundraiser – Children of Fallen Heroes
- Graham Fire Department - United Way of Alamance County Outstanding Volunteer Award

**PROCLAMATION:** Haw River Trail 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. To approve the January 13, 2026, City Council and Closed Session meeting minutes and January 20, 2026, Special Budget Planning Session meeting minutes.
- B. To approve a street closure of the 100 block of W. Elm Street for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Esperanza Hispanic Heritage Festival on September 26, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- C. To approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$229,000, comprised of the following departments: Governing Body (\$1,500), Information Technology (\$19,000), Finance (\$65,000), Police (\$85,000), General Fund Non-Departmental (\$30,000), and Utilities Fund Non-Departmental (\$60,000).
- D. To approve the Mid-Year Report and tax releases in the amount of \$282.79.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF PUBLIC STREETS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY – VALOR RIDGE SECTION 1**

City Council will consider approving a Resolution authorizing the adoption and maintenance of the portions of Wildwood Lane, Langlais Drive, and Jared Court located within Section 1 of the Valor Ridge Subdivision.



## **2. DISCUSS OPTIONS – ALCOHOL SALES – ARTS AROUND THE SQUARE**

City Council will consider options for alcohol sales during the Arts Around the Square event.

## **3. ARTS AROUND THE SQUARE – DOG-FRIENDLY EVENT**

City Council will consider allowing dogs at the Arts Around the Square Event.

## **4. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR CITY COUNCIL**

City Council will provide feedback to staff on revisions and responses to the draft Rules of Procedure for City Council.

## **5. NEW PARK PROJECT**

City Council will consider an RFQ for the new park project design and construction.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

### **CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

### **CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS**

### **CLOSED SESSION**

City Council will consider going into closed session to consult with the attorney in accordance with N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(3), City of Mebane versus City of Graham, Case #25CV007126-000.

### **ADJOURN**





## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	9/11 COMMEMORATIVE 5K EVENT – PRESENTATION
PREPARED BY:	BRIAN FAUCETTE, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS

### REQUESTED ACTION:

9/11 Commemorative 5K Event Check presentation to Children of Fallen Heroes in the amount of \$5,170.66

9/11 Commemorative 5K Event First Responders Team Cup presentation to the Graham Police Department.

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

Recreation Program Manager Michelle Shaffer and representatives from the Graham Fire Department and Graham Police Department will present the check to Ken Wasley with Children of Fallen Heroes.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

No action by Council is needed.

### SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

**NONE**



## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	RECOGNIZE GFD AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE UNITED WAY OF ALAMANCE COUNTY OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD
PREPARED BY:	CITY MANAGER MEGAN GARNER

### REQUESTED ACTION:

Recognize GFD for their work as the recipient of the United Way of Alamance County Outstanding Volunteer Award.

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

The Graham Fire Department, in partnership with the Burlington Fire Department, has been selected as the recipient of the United Way of Alamance County Outstanding Volunteer Award. In addition, the United Way will be submitting this nomination to the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service for further recognition at the state level.

This award recognizes the ongoing, monthly assistance our firefighters provide to the Salvation Army by helping unload and organize their food supply. This behind-the-scenes work plays a critical role in ensuring food reaches individuals and families in need throughout our community. Each month, a group of members from Graham and Burlington Fire Departments unload anywhere between 15,000 and 25,000 pounds of food for the pantry. A task that used to take a full day is now completed in 45 minutes thanks to their volunteer efforts. Their assistance helped maintain food quality and provided support and relief to address food insecurity.

I am extremely proud of our personnel for consistently stepping up, not for recognition, but because it is the right thing to do. This award reflects the character, compassion, and commitment to service that define the Graham Fire Department.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Assist in formally recognizing GFD for their work as the recipient of the United Way of Alamance County Outstanding Volunteer Award.



## GRAHAM CITY COUNCIL

# Proclamation

### CELEBRATING THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAW RIVER TRAIL

**WHEREAS**, the Haw River State Trail is one of North Carolina's most treasured natural resources, following 80 miles from Haw River State Park on the Rockingham County/Guilford County Line to Jordan Lake Recreation Area in Chatham County, supporting diverse wildlife, rich cultural history, and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2006, local governments, conservation organizations, state agencies, and community partners joined together to establish the Haw River Trail Partnership, envisioning a paddle and land trail that would protect the river corridor while expanding public access and outdoor recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, the creation of the Haw River Trail was closely linked with the development of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, establishing the Haw River Trail as an official segment of North Carolina's statewide flagship trail and strengthening its role in connecting communities, parks, and public lands, and

**WHEREAS**, the Haw River Trail has grown over the past 20 years into a regional asset spanning Alamance, Guilford, Rockingham, Orange, and Chatham Counties, connecting communities through hiking, paddling, fishing, viewing, and environmental education; and

**WHEREAS**, the Haw River Trail has served as a model of cooperative conservation, with local governments, landowners, volunteers, and nonprofit partners working collaboratively to protect land, enhance water quality, and create meaningful outdoor experiences for people of all ages; and

**WHEREAS**, the development of the Haw River Trail has contributed significantly to economic vitality across the region by attracting tourism, supporting local businesses, and strengthening the quality of life for residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Trail's success has been made possible through the dedication of countless volunteers, partner agencies, conservation advocates, and community members who have invested time, resources, and passion into protecting and activating this natural corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2023 The North Carolina General Assembly authorized the Haw River Trail's addition to the State Trails System; and

**WHEREAS**, the year 2026 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Haw River Trail Partnership, a milestone that celebrates two decades of progress, partnership, and shared commitment to conservation, recreation, and community connection.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** that on this **10<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026**, we, the **Graham City Council**, do hereby proclaim 2026 as the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the Haw River Trail in North Carolina, and encourage all residents to explore, enjoy, and support the continued stewardship of this extraordinary natural, historical, and recreational resource.

**Graham City Council**

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**Chelsea Dickey, Mayor**

**Attest:**

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**Renee Ward, City Clerk**

# **City of Graham**

## **City Council Meeting Minutes**

### **January 13, 2026**



The City Council of the City of Graham held a regularly scheduled meeting on January 13, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall Municipal Building, 201 South Main Street, Graham, NC.

#### **Council Members Present:**

Mayor Chelsea Dickey  
Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall  
Council Member Bobby Chin  
Council Member Bonnie Whitaker  
Council Member Jim Young

#### **Staff Present:**

Megan Garner, City Manager  
Aaron Holland, Assistant City Manager  
Bob Ward, City Attorney  
Bryan Coleman, City Attorney  
Renee Ward, City Clerk

#### **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Chelsea Dickey

#### **INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Rev. Duane Partin, First United Methodist Church, Graham, gave the invocation, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **RECOGNITION:** Mr. Andrew Heath and Mr. Omar Utley

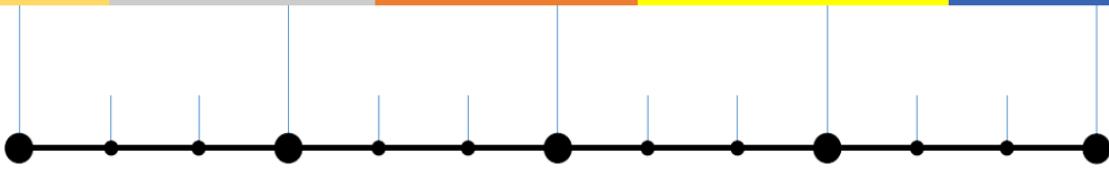


Fire Chief Tommy Cole presented Mr. Heath and Mr. Utley with a Life Saving Award. Both gentlemen were on their way to work when they noticed a house on fire. They stopped, knocked on the door, and finally woke the homeowner, who was then escorted out of the house. Because of these two men, a life was saved.

**PRESENTATION:** Mr. Brad Fowler, Alamance County Tax Administrator, presented the process for the upcoming 2027 Property Revaluation

<p><b>2027 Revaluation Update Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Major items to be discussed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 - Overview</li><li>• 2 - Project Dates</li><li>• 3 - Exemption Programs</li></ul> 	<p><b>2027 Revaluation - Why</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>North Carolina General Statute 105-286</u> - revaluation at least once every eight years.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Last conducted 2023</li><li>• The Alamance County BOC advanced to a 4-year cycle<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Values/assessments stay closer to current market</li><li>• Public stays more educated on the Revaluation Process</li><li>• Reduces the likelihood of large market increases seen in 8-year cycles</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
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<p><b>Revaluation Purpose</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>1. Redistribute the property tax base</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fair and equitable assessments</li></ul></li><li>• <b>2. Valuations/assessments updated to current market levels</b></li><li>• <b>* A revaluation is not a means to increase property tax revenue *</b></li></ul>
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<h2>Revaluation Important Dates</h2>				
<p>Dates Leading up to 2027</p>				
<p><b>Dec 25:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Engagement Begins</li><li>• Continued Review of Data</li></ul>	<p><b>Jan 26-March 26:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Engagement</li><li>• Continue Review of data</li></ul>	<p><b>April 26-June 26:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Engagement</li><li>• Finalize data review and begin revaluation review</li></ul>	<p><b>July 26-Sept 26:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Engagement</li><li>• Final Revaluation Review Underway</li><li>• Schedule of Values: Presentation, Public Hearings and approval</li></ul>	<p><b>Oct 26-Dec 26:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Engagement</li><li>• Schedule of Values Appeal period begins and ends</li><li>• Final Valuation Review</li></ul>
				

# Roadmap for 2027



## Final Valuations

- Final Values rendered and notices are mailed.
- Informal appeal period begins
- Community engagement

## Appeal Period

- Informal appeals wrap up
- BER convenes
- Last day to file a formal appeal May 2027

## Property Tax Bills

- Property tax bills will be mailed July 2027

## PTC Appeals

- Appeals will be worked throughout the year and filings to the Property Tax Commission will begin

## HOMESTEAD REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW



Alamance County Property Tax Relief  
Overview and Discussion

### APPLICATION

An application is due between January 1 and July 1 of the year in which you are applying for relief

### DEEDED OWNER

You must own the property as of January 1 of the year in which you are applying

### AGE/DISABILITY

At least 65 years of age or totally and permanently disabled

### INCOME

2025 Income cannot exceed \$38,800 for the 2026 application period

**Exclusion \$25,000 or 50% of the taxable value of house and 1 acre**

## Tax Exemptions and Exclusions

### Disabled Veterans Exclusion

(first \$45,000 of assessed value)



- Deed in applicant's name or title to residence as of January 1st
- Must be N.C. resident
- Honorably discharged veteran – 100% disabled (service related) or receive benefits for specially adapted housing under 38 U.S.C. 2101
- There is no age or income requirement

Applications available online or call (336)228-1312

Mr. Fowler stated the North Carolina General Statutes require each County to conduct at least one revaluation every eight years. He shared that Alamance County had elected to conduct a revaluation every four years. He stated that a revaluation was not a means to increase property tax revenue; it was simply to re-evaluate and re-assess properties.

Mr. Fowler stated that Vincent Valuations had been taken on by the County to conduct the 2027 revaluation. He stated they were currently re-listing and re-measuring every homeowner's property and every commercial property in Alamance County. They have been doing this for over a year.

Mr. Fowler shared that, in September, the County Commissioners would begin determining the schedule of values for Alamance County. He stated that each County was required to adopt a schedule of values related to its revaluations. By the end of the year, most values will be set. He noted that during this time, there would be numerous community engagements.

He stated that by February 1, 2027, all values will be finalized, and valuation notices will be sent out to everyone who owns property in Alamance County. Once notices are received, the appeals process can begin. The appeals process will begin informally, and if no resolution is met, then it will go before the formal process, the Board of Equalization and Review, beginning in April and concluding in May. July 2027 would be the first time the tax bill would reflect the new valuations.

Mr. Fowler shared the Homestead Exemption qualifications. To qualify, applicants must be 65 years of age or older, own the property, have a maximum salary of \$38,800 (single or married), or be totally or permanently disabled. He stated that if anyone qualified for this exemption, then the County would exclude 50% of the tax bill.

With the Disabled Veterans Exclusion, one would receive the first \$45,000 of the assessed value. You must own the property, be an NC resident, and be honorably discharged with 100% service-related disability. There is no age or income requirement.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A.** To approve the December 9, 2025, City Council minutes, December 15, 2025, Special meeting minutes, and the December 22, 2025, Special Closed Session meeting minutes.
- B.** To approve a budget amendment for \$1,500 for the purchase of a memorial bench to be placed at the Graham Regional Park.
- C.** To approve a contract extension for \$7,771,440 for the water replacement project, Phase I, and to include a portion of Phase II to maximize cost savings while contractors are mobilized. (The funding for this project has already been received.)
- D.** To approve an amendment to the audit contract with Stout, Stuart, McGowen & King to allow for a time extension to February 28, 2026.
- E.** To approve tax refunds in the amount of \$278.92 and tax releases in the amount of \$370.19.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ITEM 1: OPERATING HOURS – GRAHAM REGIONAL PARK – BILL COOKE PARK – SOUTH GRAHAM PARK**

City Council considered setting the following operating hours for Graham Regional Park, Bill Cooke Park, and South Graham Park to allow for early morning/late evening walking and summer tennis/pickleball and basketball using the lighted courts.

6:00 am – 9:00 pm – March – October  
6:00 am – 7:00 pm – November – February

Director of Parks and Recreation Brian Faucette requested that the park hours be changed from sunrise to sunset to 6 am to 9 pm, March through October, and 6 am to 7 pm, November through February. Signage would be replaced at minimal cost, and lighting for the tennis and basketball courts would be required to enable use of those facilities. He shared that walking trails would not be lit.

Mayor Dickey asked about expanding the closing time by an hour.

Mr. Faucette stated he was open to expanding the hours, but would not go much later than 10:00 pm.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall shared that some neighbors may be calling in who live near South Graham Park.

Mayor Dickey asked whether the City had experienced this before.

Mr. Faucette stated there were issues with the tennis court lights: the timer was outdated and was turning on and off, and he had recently received an email indicating the lights stayed on all weekend.

Council Member Chin shared we needed to be respectful of neighbors around the park and thought 10:00 pm was too late.

Council Member Young stated he had no issue with expanding the hours to 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm.

Council Member Whitaker stated if complaints started coming in, Council could re-address it later.

Council Member Young asked Captain Flood what he thought about the park staying open to 10:00 pm.

Captain Flood shared he did not see an issue with being open until 10:00 pm.

Motion by Whitaker to approve the park hours 6:00 am – 10:00 pm – March through October and 6:00 am – 8:00 pm – November through February, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed 3-2; Council Member Chin and Mayor Pro Tem Hall voted no.

### **ITEM 2: SESQUICENTENNIAL PARK DISCUSSION**

City Council discussed options for the Sesquicentennial Park Project.

Mayor Dickey stated that this item is back on the agenda because the Council needed to provide City

Staff with clear direction. She stated that we currently have a project in which a park is closed and fenced, right in the middle of our downtown. She noted the need to set a path for the community and staff. She stated that we need pedestrian safety downtown, a vibrant and welcoming downtown, and that we want to be responsible and respectful stewards of City funds.

Mayor Dickey noted the City of Graham received \$600,000 from the State designated for downtown improvements. She shared that these funds had been allocated for stamping concrete crosswalks. She stated that, in her understanding, Mayor Talley had noted that these textured surfaces would serve as traffic-calming measures and enhance safety. She shared that she had researched and asked staff to research, and could not find where those safety measures were impacted by stamped concrete. She said that our Public Works Director, Burke Robertson, had received quotes for Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, which have significantly increased pedestrian safety. She continued that Mr. Robertson had a quote of approximately \$100,000 to construct all the crosswalks in the downtown circle. She stated the quote was between \$4,500 and \$20,000 per crosswalk. She added that if the goal was safety, and it should be, she would consider moving towards these Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons. She added that this would significantly reduce the cost of funds from our downtown grant. She stated that \$500,000 was earmarked for pedestrian crosswalk improvements and that, if the cost could be reduced to \$100,000, \$400,000 would remain from the grant to fund foundation shoring and proceed with opening Sesquicentennial Park. She stated that the stamped crosswalks were an aesthetic addition to downtown, but removing the closed park fences would also be an aesthetic addition to downtown.

Mayor Dickey asked for Council comment.

Council Member Young asked about the cost of installing the beacon lights and their power source.

Public Works Director Robertson stated that it could be either electric or solar-powered. He stated that you had several options for automatically detecting pedestrians, and that the cost would depend on the option selected.

Council Member Young asked about the life span of the lights.

Mr. Robertson stated that most of the solar equipment he has researched indicates that batteries are 8 to 10 years, solar panels are 20 years, and everything else is standard electronics.

Council Member Whitaker asked where the lights would be positioned.

Mr. Robertson stated that you would buy a sign with a beacon light and locate it where the motorist could see it before they reach the crosswalk.

Council Member Young asked whether the \$100,000 was just for the lights or for installation.

Mr. Robertson stated it was for cost and installation.

Council Member Whitaker asked how much of the funds had been spent, including engineering work for the park that had been approved.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated funds were used for engineering work, as well as for upgrades to the lights around downtown.

City Manager Garner stated that the amount spent on pedestrian crosswalks was \$13,105, but may not include the December invoice for engineering services.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated he would like to select a different location for the park and had prepared a presentation and plans for a new site.

## Sesquicentennial Park New Park Location Proposal



### History and Uses of the Park

The park has historically served as a venue for weddings, photo ops, social gatherings, and local engagements.

## Sesquicentennial Park

- ❖ Sesquicentennial Park is a small pop-up and gazebo style park, located in downtown Graham on the traffic circle. (Per City of Graham and definition)
- ❖ The current park configuration measures approximately 2,700 square feet, with only 1,132.56 square feet of useable space.
- ❖ There is a considerable amount of city and traffic noise, around the park which is overwhelming to some residents and guest with special needs. (Community resident complaints)
- ❖ The current brick floor, is continually shifting, along with sinking bricks, which is causing a tripping hazard. (Community resident complaints) .
- ❖ The Park has no grass or open space and minimal seating.

A pop-up park is defined as a temporary, flexible public space created by transforming underutilized urban areas, like parking spots or vacant lots, into community gathering spots with seating, plants, and art, to encourage social interaction, or vibrant focal points for events and local commerce.

As by define Google, Bing, Copilot, Gemini and Wikipedia web sites

**The property deed for the Sesquicentennial Park (Deed 1218 Page 689)**

calls for a total of 3110.0 sq ft including the alleyway.

The current park covers approximately 2,700.72 sq. ft. (0.062 ac.)

With approximately 1,132.56 sq. ft. (0.026 ac.) of useable space

The alleyway is approximately 409.28 sq ft. (0.0939 ac)



To repair the park in the current condition, it will require a total demolition. Then excavation down to a depth of approximately 9 to 15 feet to reach solid ground. This calculates to removing 40,000 to 55,000 cubic feet of dirt, debris and in-fill. Then transporting the material to a certified landfill location.(approximately 2,500 ton)



**I'm proposing moving the Sesquicentennial Park to the City owned parking (shown here) lot behind Roasted Coffee, Graham Museum and Maple Street Travan**



**The new park will encompass the entire parking lot, plus the courtyard area behind the Graham Museum and two additional spaces from the city parking lot to the right. The new location would only need minor grading to remove the asphalt, grading for site drainage, drainage around the Museum and a retaining wall construction.**

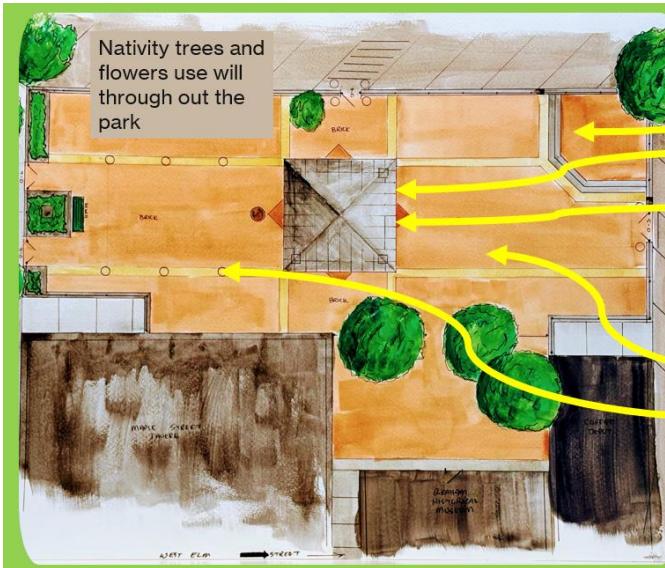


**The new park will be approximately 7,710 sq ft of useable space. This doubles the square footage compared to the current park square footage.**





- ❖ The new location plans focus on increasing park size and areas to provide more room for outdoor activities, community and multi-use events.
- ❖ The new location will provide easier access for people with varying mobility accessibility.
- ❖ The new park location aims for a sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant future for all visitors.



#### Some of the Park's features.

- ❖ Stage for performances.
- ❖ Original arbor will be moved to this location.
- ❖ Original memorial bricks, benches and metal medallions will be moved to the new park.
- ❖ The memorial bricks will be placed in a diamond pattern under the arbor.
- ❖ Concrete or a stamped concrete flooring will be used through out the park.
- ❖ Moveable flower plots.
- ❖ The Park will be located away from City and traffic noise.
- ❖ New flagpole installed for the American Flag..



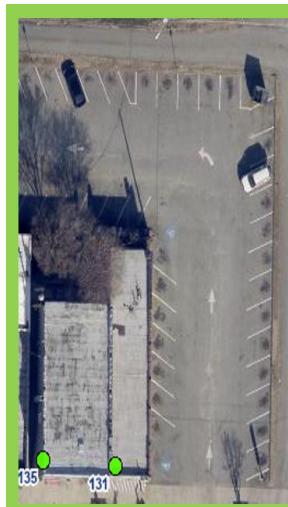
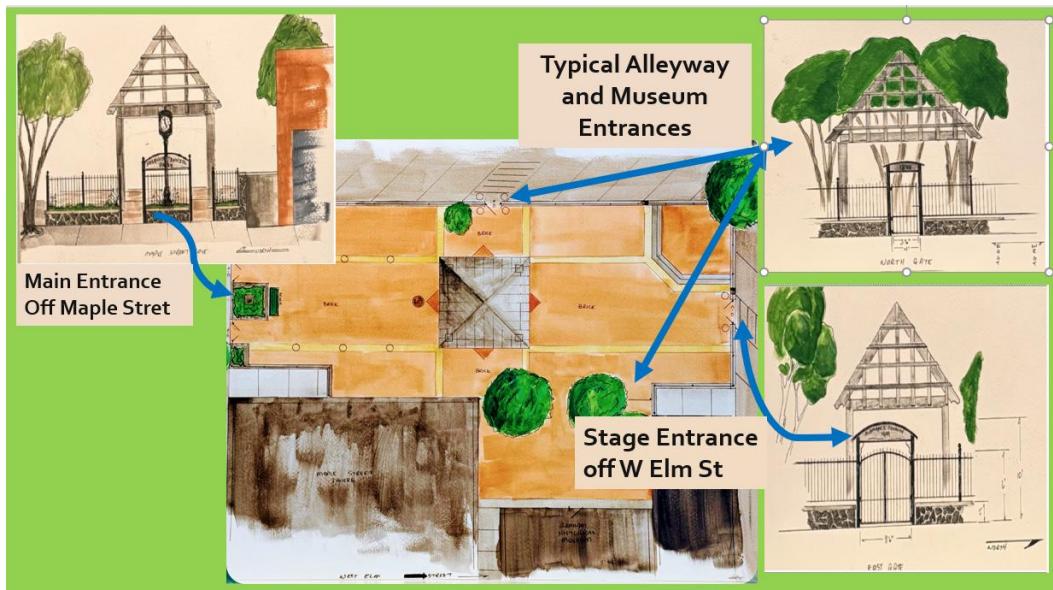
#### Additional Park features

- ❖ The new park location will be a big economic draw for our city, by hosting large events.
- ❖ The new location should help cut down on road closures along W Elm Street on the weekends.
- ❖ This new location can host twenty to thirty vendor tents.
- ❖ Large pots with planted trees that can be reconfigured as needed.
- ❖ 30, 50 and 110 Amp electrical services for food trucks at various locations along the outside edges of the park.
- ❖ A water connection, will be include in the design.



## Park Security

- ❖ The park will have gates installed at the two main and two side entrances.
- ❖ A 3'-4' foot high retaining wall topped with wrought iron fencing will be installed around the entire perimeter of the park.
- ❖ Gates will be closed and locked nightly after closing hours.
- ❖ There will be security cameras installed throughout the park.



## Phase Two Expansion of the new park:

Would use the entire City parking lot beside the Roasted Coffee Shop as a floating parking lot, Monday through Friday. If an event requires its use, the lot would be closed to parking during events. Proper notice will be given to the surrounding businesses in advance of any event. Closed signs will be posted, and traffic prevention devices will be moved into place.



Council Member Whitaker inquired about renting the park and asked whether pricing for relocation costs had been set.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated it could be leased for a day or a weekend. He stated they had spoken with the Public Works Director and determined that relocating the park would cost between \$600,000 and \$800,000 and could be completed in six months. He noted that the portion of the proposed park behind the museum would be encompassed in the new park, and the drainage issues would be addressed.

Council Member Young stated he liked the idea, that it would be an opportunity to bring the community together, and having electrical connections for food trucks would be beneficial.

Council Member Whitaker stated it was a good presentation and liked that there would be more use of the space; where it is right now, you would not get much use, even when it was open. A new park would generate revenue for the City by renting out spaces. She liked the security aspect but had concerns when digging began in the existing park, and she preferred to let someone else worry about it.

Council Member Chin stated that the current park was contaminated, that he liked the incorporation of a stage, and that he liked the controlled access via the gates. He stated it was large enough to accommodate celebrations, birthdays, and weddings, and to host up to 30 vendor spots for farmers' markets and other events.

Mayor Pro Hall stated it would be a great place for a Christmas village.

Mayor Dickey stated that it was a great plan and that the drawings were excellent. She noted her only hesitation was the recent public hearing, and only one person came forward in favor of moving the park. She said everyone else who spoke asked that it remain in its current location. She stated that Council was up here for the good of the community, and while this was an awesome concept, she had some comments on the details, but could not, in good conscience, move forward with this because the community had not come forward and told us they wanted to move it but have told us they wanted to keep it on the corner.

Council Member Whitaker stated that only 8 people showed up to speak.

Council Member Chin stated that since the public hearing and the election, he had spoken to people who had no objections to moving it. He stated the original suggestion to move it was when Mr. Compton restricted it to the area immediately behind the museum, which would occupy the same square footage. He stated that at the time, they were not discussing a real park versus a small pocket park. He noted they were asked to be good stewards of City funds for the renovation of the current location, and the cost would be about half a million dollars. He shared that when the quote came in, no soil testing had been done, but he has since learned that the area that comprised the old basement at the corner was contaminated with heavy metals.

Mayor Dickey asked Mr. Robertson whether, during their conversation, it was stated that we could mitigate the sinking foundation at the current location for \$400,000.

Mr. Robertson stated the price was based on the assumption that nothing further would be found beyond what we had discovered in the limited testing. He stated that if you start finding asbestos or an oil tank, that price would be insignificant. Based on the date, the Council was looking at approximately \$400,000. He stated he had also priced the grout injection and that, to raise the area alone, it would cost \$200,000. He said we still did not know how much more void there was.

Mayor Dickey stated they were there tonight to provide clarity for staff and a path forward for our community. She asked about the next steps. She stated that she strongly believes they should do what the community wants: keep the park in its current location. She told Council Member Young that, in his surveys, he indicated he wanted to keep the park.

Council Member Whitaker reiterated that only 8 people spoke and that they were keeping the park, just relocating and improving it. She stated it was a great way to serve the City.

Council Member Young stated this was the first time he had seen the plan and that it was a compelling argument for relocating the park. He stated this would benefit the community, that everything at the current Sesquicentennial Park would be moved to the new location, and it would be much safer than it is now. He stated the current location could be auctioned off to someone, and they would deal with the headache, so the City would not have to. He stated he knows what his answers were to the surveys in the Alamance News, but that was well before this proposal, and that he would be a fool not to have an open mind to change. He stated that this was a good idea and well thought out.

Council Member Whitaker stated that we needed to give City staff a path forward and do so now. She stated the Council had been hashing this out for two years, and the yellow police tape looked bad.

Council Member Chin noted the park's disturbance was raised in 2016 and had been an issue for 10 years, and that the Council had been kicking it down the road. He stated the Council needed to stop kicking the can. He shared it was a great opportunity for the community. He also noted the park was built in recognition of the 150th Anniversary of Alamance County and is now a City of Graham Park, which incorporates memorial bricks. He noted if others wanted to buy bricks, they could.

Mayor Dickey asked whether Council would be comfortable holding one additional public hearing to allow the community to come forward. She stated she did not feel comfortable moving it without being told by the people that they wanted it moved. She stated that if people wanted it moved, she would jump on board, but she understood they did not.

Council Member Chin stated that they have held public hearings and forums where people could speak on this, but ultimately kicked the can down the road. He stated this plan was for the betterment of the community.

Motion by Council Member Chin to move the Sesquicentennial Park from its current location and relocate it behind the Graham Historical Museum, as proposed in Mayor Pro Tem Hall's presentation.

Council Member Young asked Mr. Robertson how long it would take to restore the park to a safe condition at its current location.

Mr. Robertson stated that it would have to be done by a contractor and rebid because all prior bids were no longer valid. It would also depend on the contractor's schedule and could take 45-60 days for work to begin. He stated this work was more specialized.

Mayor Dickey stated that she and Mr. Robertson had discussed it being under a year, more like six to eight months.

Mr. Robertson stated that it was correct.

Mayor Dickey noted that \$400,000 is available to repair the park in its current location. She stated they did not have the funds to relocate it for \$600,000 to \$800,000, which exceeds the grant amount, and funds would need to be pulled from another source.

Council Member Whitaker stated the funds were for a different purpose.

Mayor Dickey stated they could reallocate it, but it would not cover \$600,000 to \$800,000, and securing funding within the six-month timeframe would take longer.

Council Member Whitaker stated that the City would generate revenue from renting it out as a venue to offset the shortfall.

Mayor Dickey asked if Recreation would handle the rentals.

Council Member Chin stated no.

Council Member Whitaker stated the City would, and that could be determined later.

Mayor Dickey stated there were many details to iron out before we move forward with this plan. She stated she would like one more public hearing before we consider a big move.

Council Member Whitaker stated they were not locking in every detail, but rather that it be moved to another location.

Council Member Chin stated this would allow City staff to begin the process of moving it.

Mayor Dickey stated that moving it without a funding apparatus would be difficult.

Council Member Chin stated that, until we receive bids for relocating the park, we can allocate funds for the relocation.

Mayor Dickey stated if Council wanted a park in six months, they needed to know where the funding would come from.

Council Member Chin stated it could be worked out once the price is known.

Council Member Chin restated his motion.

Motion by Council Member Chin that Sesquicentennial Park be relocated and re-established in the parking area behind the Graham Historical Museum, and City staff be directed to begin seeking proposals for the work necessary for construction, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed 4-1. Mayor Dickey voted no.

Mayor Dickey stated that as of now, we have \$500,000 allocated to stamping the crosswalks, and if we want that to continue, no need for a motion, but if the Council wanted any of that funding to go towards the flashers or to the Sesquicentennial Park in any capacity, we needed to amend the vote.

City Manager Garner said the project was proceeding because it had been approved by the City Council, and that any amendments would require a majority vote of the City Council to amend the project ordinance.

Council Member Chin asked what needed to be amended.

City Manager Garner stated that when the City Council adopted the Project Ordinance, there was a contingency/unencumbered amount of \$84,000 approved by the City Council in the project ordinance that is not allocated to any of the three projects that were approved. As a recap, the three projects were streetlight improvements, pedestrian crosswalk improvements, and tree replacement, all downtown. The unencumbered amount was \$84,044. She stated that the amount had not been allocated to any specific project for consideration by the City Council.

Motion by Council Member Young to amend the project ordinance by \$84,044 to go toward downtown improvements to allocate the \$84,044 for Rapid Flashing Beacons at the four crosswalks identified downtown around the square, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Dickey asked whether Council wanted to keep the crosswalk stamping as is or reallocate that money to Sesquicentennial Park.

Council Member Chin stated the stamping was being replaced by flashing lights.

Mayor Dickey stated that was not the motion; the motion was use the contingency money towards the flashing lights. \$500,000 was allocated for Crosswalks, and only \$13,000 had been spent on design and engineering.

City Manager Garner stated that the December billing had not been accounted for.

Motion by Council Member Young to take the money originally intended for the stamped crosswalks to go towards the moving of the park, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed 4-1. Mayor Dickey voted no.

City Manager Garner asked that, depending on the bids, we may need to come back to City Council to amend the project ordinance again. She stated that, as of now, the balance was \$486,895, less December, to be reallocated to the proposal tonight, with the understanding that additional funds may be required.

Council Member Chin clarified that the remaining \$500,000, originally intended for the crosswalks, would now be reallocated to the park.

City Manager Garner stated it is correct, and the engineers would be directed to cease work on the stamped crosswalk project and to relay this to DOT because it was their street. The rapid-flashing beacons would also require DOT approval before we can proceed with that process.

For clarification, the motion by Council Member Young to reallocate and amend the project ordinance for the stamped crosswalks to the new location of the Sesquicentennial Park, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed 3-2. Mayor Dickey and Mayor Pro Tem Hall voted no.

### **ITEM 3: BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPOINTMENTS**

City Council will consider making appointments to the Planning Board/Board of Adjustment and Historic Resources Commission.

#### **Applicants for Planning/Board of Adjustment – One Vacancy**

Daniel Alvis

Corbin Craig (1<sup>st</sup> choice)

Ricky Hurtado (1<sup>st</sup> choice)

Elizabeth Kirkpatrick

Jenson Roll

Richard Shevlin

Council Member Whitaker nominated Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Applicants for Historic Resources Commission – Two Vacancies**

Emma Stapleton

Corbin Craig (2<sup>nd</sup> choice)

Ricky Hurtado (2<sup>nd</sup> choice)

Richard Shevlin

Council Member Young stated the City Clerk had several people who wanted to apply but missed the deadline, and that he also knew of people who wanted to apply. He asked that this appointment be tabled for a month and re-advertised.

Mayor Dickey stated she would like to proceed with replacing these two seats, given the many more opportunities for people to join this spring.

Motion by Council Member Young to table reappointments to the Historic Resources Commission and readvertise on social media for more applicants, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed 4-1. Mayor Dickey voted no.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Keith Westbrooks, 6-4 Trockwilder Ct, Graham, expressed displeasure about a developer burning construction materials on Elm Street.

Mr. Todd Mundy, 1624 Granda Lane, Graham, spoke in reference to building an 800 square foot cottage on his property, but per the ordinance, an additional dwelling was not allowed.

Mr. Griffin McClure, 622 Johnson Ave, spoke in opposition to moving the park and expressed displeasure with the Council.

Mr. Daniel Alvis asked to speak, but had not signed up before the public comment period began.

Motion by Council Member Young to allow Mr. Daniel Alvis to speak, seconded by Mayor Dickey. The motion failed, 3-2. Mayor Dickey and Council Member Young voted yes, Council Member Whitaker, Council Member Chin, and Mayor Pro Tem Hall voted no.

### **CITY STAFF COMMENTS**

City Manager Garner:

- Requested from Council to appoint a member to serve with her on the ABSS Rezoning Advisory Committee. Mayor Pro Tem Hall volunteered. Motion by Council Member Young to appoint Mayor Pro Tem Hall to serve on the ABSS Rezoning Advisory Board, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.
- Inquired about the Special meeting scheduled for January 20, 2026, (Budget Planning Session) at 8:00 am and was scheduled to be held at the Alamance County Board of Elections, and asked to confirm where the Council wanted to hold the meeting. Mayor Dickey stated she had spoken with the City Manager about hosting the meeting at City Hall, so it could be live-streamed for the

community to review. Council Member Whitaker shared this would be a working session, and breaking into groups, and the Council Chamber was not set up for that.

Council Member Young stated that he had the equipment and would set it up for live streaming.

The consensus was to record and upload the meeting to the City's YouTube channel.

- Asked Council about holding a Special meeting with financial advisors, Davenport & Associates. She shared after Council set priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, it would then be communicated to the Department Heads, who would draft their budgets in accordance with those priorities. Council Consensus was to hold a Special Meeting on February 9, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm in the Council Chamber.
- Informed Council of the new branding efforts with the help of our new Public Relations Specialist and a graphic designer. She stated she would like to move forward with the new logo and design.



### CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Whitaker asked about discussing R-7 zoning at the next Council meeting. She shared it was too condensed and did not think it needed to be in the ordinance. Consensus was to discuss R-7 zoning at the February meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated, for the record, that the Sesquicentennial project he presented tonight was 100% his own, and that no one had seen it until today. He said he worked on it during downtime from foot surgery.

Mayor Dickey:

- 1) Mr. Mundy said an amendment to the development ordinance was needed to allow a second dwelling – consensus was to bring it to the Planning Board and then present it to the Council. The consensus of the Council was to send it to the Planning Board.
- 2) She asked Chief Cole to speak about the burning complaint from Mr. Westbrook. Chief Cole shared that he had been notified and personally visited the site. The construction crew was notified that they were not permitted to burn and that no other debris could be burned.
- 3) Invited those interested to attend the January 20, 2026 planning session at 8:00 am at the Board of Elections.
- 4) Congratulated Detective Diezel for earning the Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate.
- 5) Shared that she had been in conversation with Alamance County Assistant Manager Brian Baker to identify economic development opportunities for underutilized properties or vacant properties.
- 6) Thanked City staff for all they do.

## **CLOSED SESSION:**

City Council considered going into closed session to consult with the attorney in accordance with N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(3), City of Mebane versus City of Graham, Case #25CV007126-000.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to go into closed session, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to return to open session, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

No action was taken.

## **ADJOURN**

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously. (8:07 p.m.)

*Renee M. Ward, CMC*  
City Clerk

January 13, 2026  
City Council Meeting

**City of Graham City Council  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Budget Planning Session  
January 20, 2026**



The City Council of the City of Graham held a Special Meeting for a Budget Planning Session on January 20, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. at the Alamance County Board of Elections, 1128 South Main Street, Graham, NC.

**Councilmembers Present:**

Mayor Chelsea Dickey  
Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall  
Council Member Bobby Chin  
Council Member Bonnie Whitaker  
Council Member Jim Young

**Staff Present:**

Megan Garner, City Manager  
Aaron Holland, Assistant City Manager  
Renee Ward, City Clerk

Mayor Dickey opened the meeting and asked the Council for consensus to revise the Boards and Commissions policy.

The Council's consensus was to have staff review the policy and make recommendations for the Council's consideration.

Facilitator Rebecca Jackson, True North Performance Group, reviewed the strategic planning session objectives and agenda.

**Ms. Jackson asked the Council to list some of its successes and accomplishments.**

**What had the City of Graham accomplished over the past 12-18 months, and what made it possible?**

- Council Member Chin – Wastewater treatment plant – increases quality of life and supports growth.
- Council Member Young - Designated a church as a historical designation.
- Council Member Whitaker – New City digital sign – keeps citizens informed.
- Mayor Pro Tem Hall - Major software improvements and ERP systems – increase a high-performing organization to serve citizens in a more efficient way.
- Mayor Dickey – Graham Regional Master Plan approved – this will allow for more active play for our citizens and community.
- Mayor Pro Tem Hall – Purchased a new ladder truck for the Fire Department – helps lower insurance rates for citizens.
- Mayor Dickey – New water lines replacement of 100-year-old pipes– upgrading the main water line from the filtration system for more capacity.
- Council Member Chin – Developed a career ladder for many employee positions, including training and development, which helps improve morale.
- Council Member Whitaker - Purchased additional land that was mostly paid for with grant money to allow for parks to expand to offer many different opportunities.

- Mayor Dickey – Hired a new police chief – Parks and Rec launched a new after-school program – New businesses coming downtown (CVB) – staff worked to dedicate churches as warm spaces.
- Mayor Pro Tem Hall – Hired a Public Relations Specialist – to promote the city and keep citizens informed.

**Ms. Jackson asked Council to list a few keys to success:**

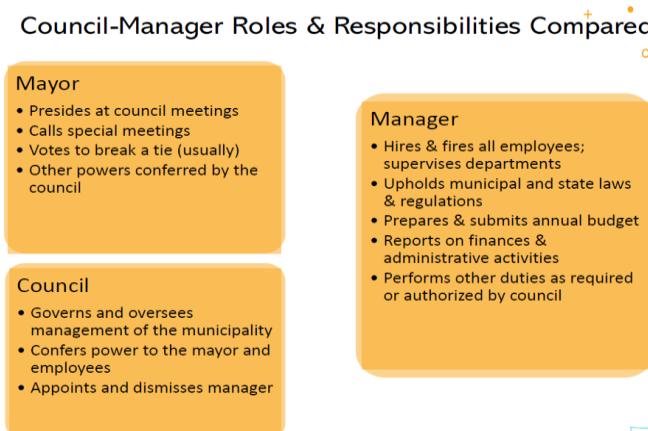
- Mayor Pro Tem Hall - Commitment to the citizens of Graham.
- Council Member Young – To serve all citizens coming to Graham, not just City residents.
- Council Member Whitaker – Community engagement - people will tell you what they want.
- Council Member Whitaker – Funding and resources.
- Mayor Dickey – Engaging our partners.
- Council Member Chin – Businesses look to have infrastructure in place – Keep note on what's going on in surrounding cities and counties – Work on infrastructure to attract regional opportunities.

**What do we carry into this retreat? Three important things you are carrying into this retreat.**

- Council Member Young – Renegotiate agreements with Mebane – Sesquicentennial Park decision – Attract more small businesses and help them with grants
- Council Member Whitaker – Rewriting the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) – Renegotiating our contracts with surrounding municipalities - bring in new business, such as a sit-down family restaurant and grocery store.
- Council Member Chin – Construction of new fire department – expand reservoir system – ready infrastructure at sites for new industry (water, power, roads)
- Mayor Dickey – Prioritize long-term planning, funding residential services and infrastructure – emphasis on community input – Finding common ground and a path forward as a board.
- Mayor Pro Tem Hall – Continue moderate to a low growth rate.
- Council Member Chin – Balance out funding stream between property tax and commercial revenues.

Council took a five-minute break.

**What are the seven expectations for an effective Council-Manager Relationship? How are we applying them?**





## Challenges for Elected Boards

- Bound by more legal requirements than nonprofit or for-profit boards
- Often don't think of group development as a priority or a shared responsibility
- Discussing interpersonal issue in open meetings
- Contentious campaigns may reduce trust among the Board, staff and community
- Previous community involvement may cause board members to make assumptions about each other's interests and motives
- High turnover can reduce commitment to group development.

## Seven Expectations for an Effective Council–Manager Relationship

- ❖ 1. Shared Commitment to Serving the Community
- ❖ 2. The Manager Is a Trusted Advisor
- ❖ 3. Council–Employee Relationships Are Managed Thoughtfully
- ❖ 4. The Council Acts—and Is Addressed—as a Body
- ❖ 5. Mutual Trust Is Built Over Time
- ❖ 6. Open, Respectful Feedback Is Encouraged
- ❖ 7. Shared Responsibility for Governing Effectiveness

## Ten Habits of High-Performing Governing Boards

### High-Performing Governing Board Habits

Think and Act Strategically	Understand the Law and Policy-Making Process	Demonstrate Teamwork	Master Small Group Decision Making	Honor the Council Staff Partnership
Develop and maintain a clear, big-picture vision for the community's future Avoid micromanaging staff or operational decisions.	Understand legal responsibilities, ethical obligations, and the difference between policy and administration.	Board members work collaboratively, respect differing viewpoints, and support decisions once made.	Use effective meeting practices, deliberation skills, and clear processes to make sound collective decisions.	Boards respect for the council–manager form of government. Council sets direction and policy. Staff implements decisions and manages operations.

20

# High-Performing Governing Board Habits

Use Council Time Strategically	Adopt Clear Rules of Procedure	Review Accurate Data and feedback	Recognize Shared Constituencies	Act Transparently
<p>Intentionally allocate time across 4 key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Goal-setting &amp; visioning</li> <li>-Work / study sessions</li> <li>-Regular meetings &amp; public hearings</li> <li>-Community &amp; outreach.</li> </ul>	<p>Clear meeting rules and agreed-upon protocols support fairness, efficiency, and productive discussion.</p>	<p>Boards rely on timely, accurate information to evaluate policy effectiveness and organizational performance.</p>	<p>The community is interconnected &amp; work jointly with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Other local governments</li> <li>-State &amp; federal agencies</li> <li>-Non-profits</li> <li>-Community Stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p>Boards operate openly, communicate clearly, and make decisions in ways that build public trust and confidence.</p>

21

## Strengthen effective governance

## Governing is a Team Sport

- Only the board can govern the board
- Responsiveness and respect are a two-way street
- The manager reports to the governing board, not to individual elected officials
- Elected officials' behaviors are visible to the public.



## What would be the very best team?

Council comments: Work is fun, highly efficient, commitment, trust, clear goals, collaboration, innovation, dedication to the mission, respect for one another, and positive relationships.

Ms. Jackson shared that this should be the team's commitment going forward, and everyone should work towards this type of atmosphere.

## What Makes a Great Team?

- A clear mission
- Informal atmosphere
- Lots of discussion
- Active listening
- Trust and openness
- Disagreement is OK
- Criticism is issue-oriented, never personal
- Consensus is the norm
- Effective leadership
- The issue is not who controls, but how to get the job done
- Clarity of assignments
- Shared values and norms of behavior
- Commitment



### What behaviors should be expected?

Council comments: good listeners, commitment, actions should be focused on your job and follow through, ability to come to a decision in a timely manner, keep an open mind, highly motivated, accept responsibility, and be accountable.

Passion can make you close-minded if not everyone agrees. You have to bring people along. Sometimes you come in thinking one way, and your mind changes during debate and discussion.

## Strategic Vision

### Strategic Vision

#### Long-term and short-term planning

- Long-term planning is a comprehensive framework that comprises of goals to be met within a certain period, (3, 5,10 years) Vision and goals.
- Short-term planning evaluates your progress in the **present and creates an action plan** to improve performance, typically in 12 month period.

#### Leading with Vision

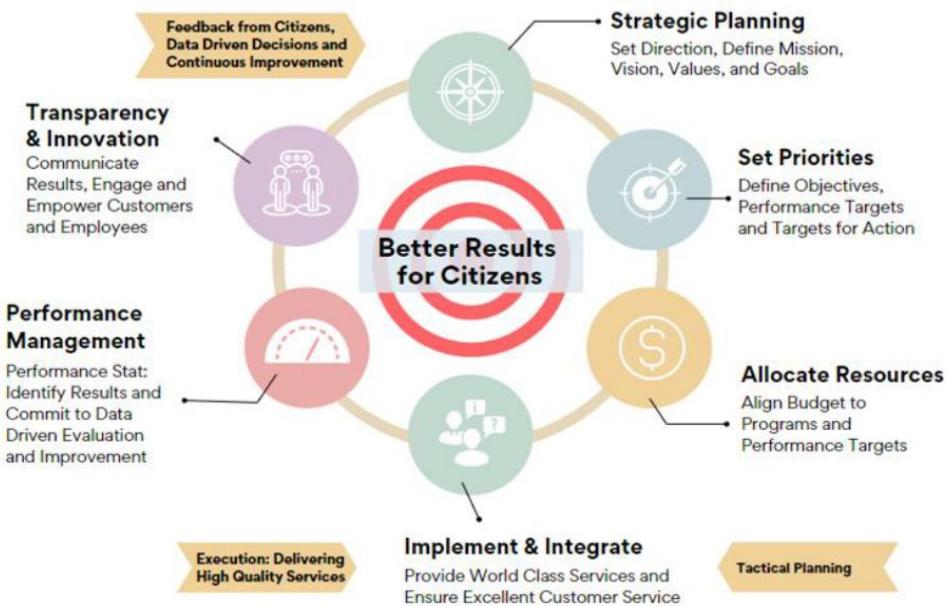
Externally focused Simple  
Exciting  
BIG  
Clear  
Inspirational  
It's where we want to be!



*It's Your True North!*

Externally focused  
Simple  
Exciting  
BIG  
Clear  
Inspirational

## Aligning the Organization for Success



Lunch.

### **Leading with Vision:**

#### **Council's role in pursuing vision:**

**Who are we?** To serve the citizens of Graham, a municipality, with public services.

**What is our purpose?** To be good stewards of tax dollars, serve the citizens.

**Who do we serve?** Residents of Graham, businesses, and business owners and are held accountable to residents.

**What makes us unique?** Safety and quality of life for the City of Graham.

#### **City Council Goals:**

Ms. Jackson asked Council to identify its best goals.

**Infrastructure** - to ensure outdated infrastructure is completed, road paving, water lines, all past due for maintenance and replacement, and connect sidewalks to increase walkability.

**Community engagement and stakeholder strategy** – Duke Energy, DOT with state roads - to help citizens understand what we are doing and increase transparency; use tools and methods, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to tell the City's positive story.

**Economic Development** - diversify tax base - providing an environment to attract businesses or create an environment to bring industry, commercial, retail, and residents to Graham – outcome for the community, maintain a responsible tax rate, ensure local jobs, potential city survey (costs money)

**Maintain effective growth development management and maintain core services**, - Update UDO and Comprehensive Plans, keep small-town charm, lessen the burden on City inspectors, and City services.

**Public Safety** – ensure safety in our community – low response time and low crime rate, lighting in downtown for pedestrian safety, new fire department – maintain and provide appropriate building and equipment, maintain effective police and fire coverage.

**Parks & Recreation** – activities for all, quality, safe and well-being, aesthetically pleasing and fun to visit, increasing green space, Graham Regional master plan, Graham/Mebane Lake Master Plan.

**High Performing Organization** – good financial management, capital improvement, equipment, IT for effective services, retain employees (benefits, wages, health insurance), update effective processes, and fixed asset management.

2:01 pm – Break

**Council Key Strategic Goals for next 12 to 18 months:** (not in any particular order)

- 1) **Safe and Secure Community** – decide on a funding mechanism for a new fire station and begin construction, to install beacon lighting for Court Square, prioritize fire department staffing to improve measures (meet standards for today and have staff in place for the new fire department)
- 2) **Effective Community Engagement and Strategy** – tell the City's story through social media, develop an appropriate communications strategy, and seek Council input.
- 3) **High Performing Organization** – Davenport - implement Council funding priorities and strategies, implement funding priorities for capital and equipment, fund remaining technology improvement plan,
- 4) **Parks and Recreation** – move forward with the Master Plan Phase 1 – with development of budget and approved actions (discuss funding at the February 9, 2026, meeting), receive report and cost for the Sesquicentennial Park, and move forward with Council-approved action.
- 5) **Economic Development** - funding and begin UDO rewrite, strengthen partnership with the Chamber and ACC for small business development, and industry to include annual reporting.
- 6) **Infrastructure** - backlog of street repaving, utility replacements/upgrades (water, sewer, stormwater), and renegotiate the water agreement with Mebane.

**Council's Top three Priorities:**

- #1 – fund and begin UDO revision
- #2 - fund backlog of utility upgrades/replacements/repairs
- #3 – begin design and construction/funding for new fire department

February 9, 2026 - Davenport Associates /Council Members– will review funding of long-term capital in the general fund and utilities, and put dollars to the Council's goals.

**Next Steps:**

- 1) Receive Davenport funding capabilities
- 2) Write vision, mission, goals, and team commitments
- 3) Share with Council and staff
- 4) City Manager to give monthly PSA updates
- 5) Departmental budget prep with staff
- 6) Budget prep Council in May

Council consensus and support were for its 12–18-month key strategic goals and its top three priorities.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 3:28 pm.

*Renee M. Ward, CMC*  
City Clerk

Special City Council Meeting  
Budget Planning Session  
January 20, 2026

# STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	STREET CLOSURE FOR ESPERANZA 2026 HISPANIC HERITAGE FESTIVAL
PREPARED BY:	AARON HOLLAND, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

## REQUESTED ACTION:

Approve the street closure of the 100 block of W. Elm Street for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Esperanza Hispanic Heritage Festival on September 26, 2026.



## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

Yholima Vargas and Kim Willard request the approval of closing the 100 block of W. Elm Street for the 6th Annual Esperanza Hispanic Heritage Festival, as described in the attached application. The requested closure would be from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. (including set up/clean up).

## FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval. The various City departments that may be involved have reviewed the request and provided the organizer with pertinent information that must be satisfied.

## SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

I move that we approve the request from Yholima Vargas and Kim Willard for the 6th Annual Esperanza Hispanic Heritage Festival on September 26, 2026, and the closure of the 100 block of W. Elm Street from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.



1. Your email: esperanzafestival@gmail.com
2. Event name (if applicable): Esperanza Festival
3. Reason for the event (be specific): Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration
4. Event date(s): 09/26/2026

5. Provide your event's setup, start, end, and cleanup times. (Ex: Name of Event 6:30 a.m. - 8 a.m. setup | 8 a.m. event start | 2 p.m. event ends | 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. cleanup):

Setup - 8:00 AM Event start - 12:00 pm Event end - 8:00 pm  
Clean Up - 8:00 - 11:00 pm

6. Event category

Please check all that apply appropriate category for your event.

Concert/Performance  
 Exhibit  
 Farmer's Market  
 Festival/Fair  
 Parade/Procession  
 Run/Walk  
 Food Truck Rodeo  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Where are you requesting for your event to occur?

Be specific identifying street names or City facilities being requested for use?

100 Block of West Elm Street

8. Does your event include the request to close streets?

Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

9. Identify the street(s) you are requesting to have closed for your event.

100 Block of West Elm Street (Graham)

10. Identify your street closure time(s) and will you anticipate when they will return to normal traffic flow.

8:00 AM to 11:00 pm



11. What is your anticipated event attendance total? 2000

12. Does your event include musical entertainment?

Yes  No

13. Where will your musical entertainment be located?

On the stage to be at the courthouse side of West Elm st.

14. Will sound amplification be used?  Yes  No

If yes, provide the start time and end time.

12:00 pm - 8:00 pm (Event time)

15. Will inflatables or similar devices be used at your event?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe. \*Please note, Insurance requirements must be met in order to offer this activity.

We are planning to have (2) inflatables in the (kid's zone)

16. Does your event include the use of fireworks, rockets, lasers, or other pyrotechnics?

Yes  No

If yes, please describe. \*\*\*Note: These requests will be subject to the approval of the City of Graham Police & Fire Departments in conjunction with State Laws governing this type of activity.

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17. Will alcohol be served, sold or consumed at your event?

Yes  No

If you answered yes to the question above, please check all that apply to your event.

- Alcohol will be available free of charge
- Alcohol will be by purchase only
- Alcohol being served and or sold at my event includes
- Beer only
- Wine only
- Beer & Wine



18. Describe your security plan to ensure the safe sale and or distribution of alcohol at your event.

N/A

19. Does your event include food concession and/or food preparation areas?

Yes  No

If yes, please select the method of cooking that pertains to your event.

Gas

Electric

Charcoal

Other: 5-8 Food trucks (vendors)

20. Do you plan to provide portable toilets at your event?

Yes  No

If yes, list the total number of portable toilets: 2

21. Portable toilet company name: Lloyd's

If no, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

22. Explain your plan for cleanup and removal of trash, waste, and garbage during & after your event.

We use festival volunteers and planning Committee members

Does your event require additional trash receptacles?

Yes  No

If yes, what is the requested number of additional trash receptacles? 12

23. Will there be any tents, canopies or temporary structures at your event?

Yes  No



24. Applicant name and affiliated agency, if applicable

Kim Willard - Alamance Arts

25. Applicant's Address

213 S Main st. Graham NC

26. Applicant's phone number

336-226-4495

27. Applicant's email address

programs@alamancearts.org

28. Provide the event's point of contact if different from the applicant. (First & Last name, Phone number, & Email Address)

Yolima Vargas - 919-417-4411

Yolimavargas@yahoo.com

29. How many years has this event taken place? 5 2021- 2025



## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	Budget Amendments
PREPARED BY:	Megan Garner, City Manager, Theresa Turner, Finance Officer

### REQUESTED ACTION:

Approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$260,500, comprised of the following departments: Governing Body (\$1,500), Information Technology (\$19,000), Finance (\$65,000), Police (\$85,000), and General Fund Non-Departmental (\$30,000) and Utilities Fund Non-Departmental (\$60,000).

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

Budget amendments are requested for the following reasons:

**Governing Body:** The Mayor has requested to attend the NC Main Street conference with estimated expenses of \$1,500 to include registration, hotel, mileage, and potential per diem.

**Information Technology:** In prior fiscal years, all salary-related expenses were split between funds 10 (general) and 31 (utilities). In the current fiscal year, the funding was restructured so that fund 10 pays for the full salaries and benefits; however, during the budget process, less than the full amount of the necessary salaries and related expenses were budgeted.

**Finance:** Extensive internal audit work performed for fiscal year 2024 by two different auditing firms, much of which was paid from the current fiscal year. As you'll recall, the 2024 audit was delayed in submission to the Local Government Commission. A large portion of the additional audit funds helped ensure the City received 100% of the sales tax owed to citizens. Internal practices are being adjusted to streamline processes, thereby making the work less cumbersome with the added goal of bringing more of these duties in-house and away from outside auditing firms.

**Police:** In the current fiscal year, there are four retirements, and the subsequent payouts were not known in advance to be included in the budget process. This has placed a strain on the salary and related items within the Department's budget.

**Non-Departmental (Funds 10 and 31):** The insurance and bonds, including those for property/liability and workers' compensation, have increased significantly, thereby exceeding the amounts budgeted.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

\$260,500

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval.

**SUGGESTED MOTION(S):**

Make a motion to a budget amendment in the amount of \$260,500, comprised of the following departments: Governing Body (\$1,500), Information Technology (\$19,000), Finance (\$65,000), Police (\$85,000), and General Fund Non-Departmental (\$30,000) and Utilities Fund Non-Departmental (\$60,000).

**CITY OF GRAHAM**  
**BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE**  
**2025-2026**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT**  
**THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.**

**EXPENDITURES**

DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE ( DECREASE)
Governing Body - Travel	7,000.00	8,500.00	1,500.00		1,500.00
IT - Group Insurance	11,000.00	24,000.00	13,000.00		13,000.00
IT - Longevity Pay	3,700.00	9,700.00	6,000.00		6,000.00
Finance - Contracted Services	45,000.00	90,000.00	45,000.00		45,000.00
Finance - Audit	58,000.00	78,000.00	20,000.00		20,000.00
PD - Salaries & Wages	4,024,000.00	4,109,000.00	85,000.00		85,000.00
Non-Dept. (Fund 10) - Group Insurance	285,000.00	315,000.00	30,000.00		30,000.00
Non-Dept. (Fund 31)Contracted Services	110,223.00	170,223.00	60,000.00		60,000.00
	<b>4,543,923.00</b>	<b>4,804,423.00</b>	<b>260,500.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>260,500.00</b>

**Section 2.**

**REVENUES**

	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Current Year Tax					
	<b>\$7,300,000.00</b>	<b>\$7,560,500.00</b>	<b>\$260,500.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$260,500.00</b>
	<b>7,300,000.00</b>	<b>7,560,500.00</b>	<b>260,500.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>260,500.00</b>

Adopted this 10th day of February 2025.

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Chelsea Dickey

\_\_\_\_\_  
Renee M. Ward, City Clerk

# City of Graham

P. O. Drawer 357  
201 South Main Street  
Graham, North Carolina 27253  
(336) 570-6700 / Fax: (336) 570-6703

## MID YEAR REPORT

January 28, 2026

	TOTAL PROPERTY VALUATION	RATE	AMOUNT OF LEVY
TAX LEVY - CITY WIDE	2,546,997,993	0.3099%	7,893,148.18

### DISCOVERIES:

CURRENT YEAR & PRIOR YEARS WITH VARIOUS TAX RATES	15,586,526	58,883.87
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### ANNEXATIONS:

<u>ABATEMENTS:</u>	(2,832,524)	(8,901.97)
CURRENT LEVY	2,559,751,995	7,943,130.08

OUTSTANDING REAL PROPERTY TAXES:	326,895.11
OUTSTANDING PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES:	<u>68,354.62</u>

TOTAL OUTSTANDING TAXES	395,249.73
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CURRENT YEAR TAXES COLLECTED:	7,547,880.35
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TO DATE, THE PERCENT OF CURRENT YEAR COLLECTED:	95.02%
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I REQUEST THAT THE DATE BE SET FOR LIEN ADVERTISEMENT ON MARCH 19, 2026 IN THE ALAMANCE NEWS. COST FOR ADVERTISING WILL BE \$5.00 PER PARCEL ADVERTISED AND WILL BE CHARGED ONE TIME TO THE TAXPAYER.

Submitted by Sandy P. Callahan, Tax Collector

**CITY OF GRAHAM**  
**RELEASE ACCOUNTS**

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**FEBRUARY**

<u>ACCT #</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>REASON FOR RELEASE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>RELEASED</u>
17884	2025	SALEM LEASING	TOTAL LOSS IRP BY INSURANCE CO	\$188.82	
17896	2025	SALEM LEASING	IRP SOLD 6-10-2024 - BILLED INERROR	\$93.97	

***TOTAL RELEASES***      ***\$282.79***



## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	ACCEPTANCE OF PUBLIC STREETS AND RIGHTS OF WAY FOR VALOR RIDGE SECTION 1
PREPARED BY:	CAMERON WEST, SENIOR PLANNER

### REQUESTED ACTION:

Approve Resolution authorizing the adoption and maintenance of the portions of Wildwood Lane, Langlais Drive, and Jared Court, located within Section 1 of the Valor Ridge subdivision.

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

Development in Section 1 of the Valor Ridge Subdivision has been completed, and the streets have been offered to the City of Graham for adoption. These streets have been inspected by Public Works, the City's Engineer, and the Planning Department for compliance with the proposed development pattern permitted under their approved construction drawings. All public infrastructure in these phases has been deemed complete and meets the standards for acceptance.

The portions of the streets to be dedicated are as follows: Wildwood Lane (50-foot public ROW) includes approximately

0.13 miles, Langlais Drive (50-foot public ROW) is 0.11 miles, Jared Court (50 and 110-foot public ROW) includes approximately 0.03 miles. The total length of roadway in these sections of the Valor Ridge neighborhood is approximately 0.27 miles.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

Low. While anticipated revenues are unlikely to cover the long-term maintenance of this street network, the City has been serving this neighborhood with trash and other services for some time. This acceptance of public improvements would increase resurfacing requirements as well as winter preparation and snow removal. Annual Powell Bill revenues are far less than what the cost of upkeep and maintenance requires. As such, there is an annual shortfall from the general fund to cover roadway maintenance and eventual repaving.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

### SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

I move we approve the Resolution Adopting Ownership of the portions of Wildwood Lane, Langlais Drive, and Jared Court located within Section 1 of the Valor Ridge subdivision.

## **A RESOLUTION ORDERING ADOPTION OF THE PORTIONS OF WILDWOOD LANE, LANGLAIS DRIVE, AND JARED COURT LOCATED WITHIN SECTION 1 OF THE VALOR RIDGE SUBDIVISION**

WHEREAS, NCGS §160D-806 and Article VIII, Section 10.339(d)(5) of the City of Graham Development Ordinance provide that City Council may, by resolution, accept offers of public dedication made to the public of lands and facilities for streets, sidewalks, open spaces and public utilities after verification from the Technical Review Committee that such properties and improvements are in a manner acceptable for acceptance; and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has been provided with an offer of public dedication of lands and improvements of the portions of Wildwood Lane, Langlais Drive, and Jared Court located within Section 1 of the Valor Ridge subdivision, which are described on the legally recorded final plat in Plat Book 82, Page 378 of the Alamance County Registry; and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham Technical Review Committee has reviewed the land and improvements placed upon them provided as part of the offer of public dedication, and such land and improvements have been found to be in compliance with standards in place for such land and improvements; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Graham, North Carolina, that the offer of public dedication be accepted for those portions of Wildwood Lane (50-foot public ROW) includes approximately 0.13 miles, Langlais Drive (50-foot public ROW) is 0.11 miles, Jared Court (50 and 110-foot public ROW) includes approximately 0.03 miles, as offered and recorded on the final plat for Valor Ridge Section 1 in Plat Book 82, Page 378 of the Alamance County Registry; and

### **SECTION 1. Terms and Conditions of Acceptance:**

1. The developer shall guarantee all materials and workmanship for a period of 12 months from the date of official acceptance by the City Council, as specified under Section 10.339 (d)(5)(c) of the City of Graham Development Ordinance;
2. The acceptance by the City Council shall not be interpreted in any way to relieve any developer, contractor, subcontractor, insurance company, owner, or other person of his individual or several obligations under any ordinance, policy, or contract or to otherwise reduce or eliminate the rights of the city, its agents and employees against any other party connected with or in any way related to the development of the subdivision and facilities. The acceptance shall not be interpreted as a waiver of any defense or immunities that the city, its agencies or employees may assert or be entitled to;
3. All rights, privileges and warranties of whatsoever nature and kind, for equipment, supplies, materials, goods, and services shall be assigned to the city and any and all benefits derived there from shall inure to the city, its agents, and employees. The acceptance of the lands and facilities shall be conditioned upon the owners covenanting and warranting that they are lawfully seized and possessed of all the lands and facilities dedicated to the public; that they have good and lawful authority to dedicate the same to the public for the stated purpose; that the lands and facilities are free and clear of any deed of trust, mortgage, lien or assessments and that the dedicators for their heirs, successors, executors, administrators, and assigns, covenant that they will warrant and defend the dedication of such land and facilities against any and all claims and demands whatsoever; and

4. Acceptance of dedication of lands and facilities shall not obligate the city to construct, install, maintain, repair, replace, extend, improve, build or operate any public facilities or utilities which are not in existence as of the date of the acceptance of the lands and facilities. Such acceptance shall not obligate the city to construct any main, line, pipe, lateral, or other extension or permit connection to the city's water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, drainage or other public utilities systems.

SECTION 2. This Resolution shall become effective immediately

upon adoption. This the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

---

Chelsea Dickey, Mayor

Attest:

---

Renee Ward, City Clerk

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**ALAMANCE COUNTY**

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of a resolution duly adopted by the City Council of the City of Graham, North Carolina, at a meeting held on February 10, 2026 at the City Hall in the City of Graham.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the official corporate seal of said City to be affixed, this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

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City Clerk



# STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	OPTIONS FOR ALCOHOL SALES AT ARTS AROUND THE SQUARE
PREPARED BY:	BRIAN FAUCETTE, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS

## REQUESTED ACTION:

The Recreation and Parks Department requests direction from Council concerning a request from the owners of Forgotten Road Ales to include vendors selling and serving alcohol at Arts Around the Square.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

In December 2025, the owners of Forgotten Road Ales (FRA) approached GRPD staff to discuss the possibility of requesting City Council consideration to allow alcohol sales at the 2026 Arts Around the Square event. Following this initial conversation, GRPD staff consulted with the Graham Police Department to review public safety considerations, ordinance requirements, and operational impacts related to alcohol sales at the event. After this consultation, GRPD staff met with the owners of Forgotten Road Ales on January 14, 2026, to discuss the proposed event layout, designated alcohol service areas, and overall logistics for alcohol sales at the 2026 Arts Around the Square.

Forgotten Road Ales requested that this item be brought forward for City Council consideration at the February 2026 Council meeting.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

No additional expenses are expected. The staffing plan for City resources will be the same with or without alcohol vendors. Potential revenue could increase. The current fee for food vendors is \$100; the suggested fee for alcohol vendors is \$250.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

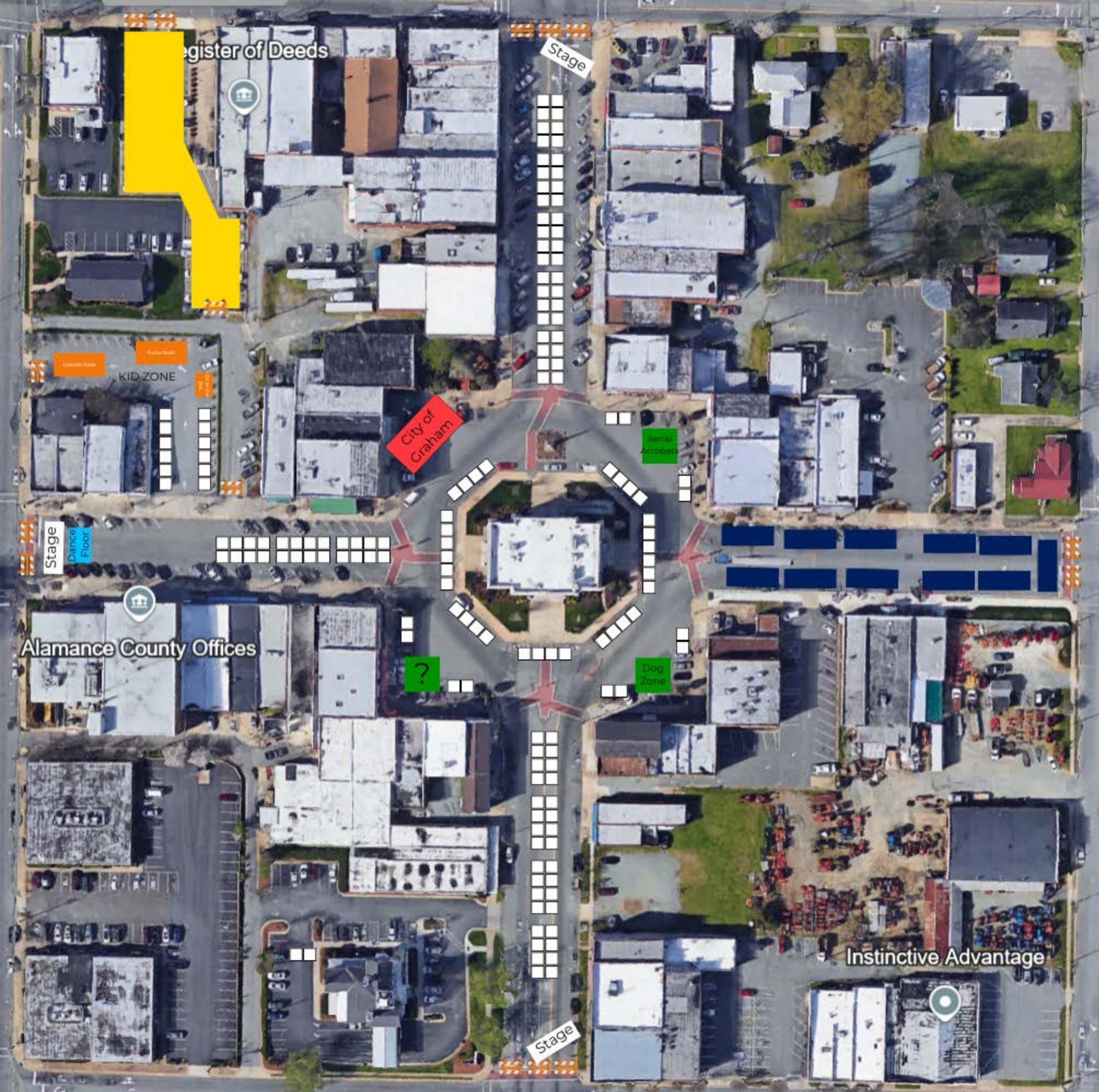
Staff recommends allowing vendors to sell and serve alcohol within designated areas of the 2026 Arts Around the Square event footprint, while maintaining a clearly defined alcohol-free family area. Specifically, staff recommends that alcohol sales and consumption be permitted on the 100 blocks of North Main Street, South Main Street, West Elm Street, East Elm Street, and Court Square. The City Parking Lot adjacent to the Graham Historical Museum will be restricted from alcohol being sold, served, or consumed, and will be designated as a protected **Kid Zone**. Implementation of this recommendation would require City Council to temporarily suspend the City Ordinance found in Chapter 12; Article I; Division 1; Section 12-11 – *Wine or Beer Container – Public Display* within the approved event areas for the duration of the event.

All vendors must submit the required licenses for GPD review and approval by May 1, 2026.

## SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

**I MAKE A MOTION TO SUSPEND CHAPTER 12; ARTICLE I; DIVISION 1; SECTION 12-11 – *WINE OR BEER CONTAINER – PUBLIC DISPLAY* WITHIN THE APPROVED EVENT AREAS FOR THE DURATION OF ARTS AROUND THE SQUARE ON MAY 16, 2026.**

West Harden Street





# STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	REQUEST TO DESIGNATE ARTS AROUND THE SQUARE AS A DOG-FRIENDLY EVENT
PREPARED BY:	BRIAN FAUCETTE, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS

## REQUESTED ACTION:

The Recreation and Parks Department requests direction from City Council regarding allowing dogs to attend Arts Around the Square as a dog-friendly event.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

In preparation for the 2026 Arts Around the Square event, Graham Recreation and Parks has been approached by three local animal welfare organizations, the Humane Society of Alamance County, Burlington Animal Services, and Little Blue Tattoo Rescue, expressing interest in attending and participating in the event. In response, staff has explored opportunities to incorporate dog-friendly elements, including art-themed activities involving canine participants, while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for all attendees.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

No additional City expenses are anticipated as a result of allowing Arts Around the Square to be designated as a dog-friendly event. The staffing plan for City resources will remain the same regardless of whether dogs are permitted at the event.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends allowing dogs to attend Arts Around the Square, subject to the following restrictions to ensure public safety, animal welfare, and a positive experience for all attendees:

- All dogs must be on a non-retractable leash no longer than six (6) feet at all times.
- Dogs must be fully vaccinated in accordance with state and local requirements.
- Pet owners are responsible for cleaning up pet waste immediately and properly disposing of it in designated receptacles.
- Dogs displaying aggressive behavior or creating a safety concern must be removed from the event area at the request of public safety officials.
- Dogs must remain under the control of their owner or handler at all times.

Approval of this recommendation would require City Council to temporarily suspend Ch. 4, Article II, Sec. 4-48 – *Parades, Concerts, and Special Events; Animals Prohibited* for the duration of the event.

## SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

**I MAKE A MOTION TO SUSPEND CH. 4, ARTICLE II, SEC. 4-48 – PARADES, CONCERTS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS; ANIMALS PROHIBITED FOR THE DURATION OF ARTS AROUND THE SQUARE ON MAY 16, 2026.**

# STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	Draft Rules of Procedure
PREPARED BY:	Megan Garner, City Manager

## REQUESTED ACTION:

Review and provide consensus feedback to staff on revisions and responses to the draft Rules of Procedure for City Council.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

At the December 9, 2025 meeting, City Council consensus was for staff to prepare a draft rules of procedure for consideration. Staff provided each Council Member a paper copy of the suggested Rules of Procedure published by the UNC – School of Government. Staff used their template, North Carolina General Statutes, and common practices employed by City Council to prepare the draft before you for consideration.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to implement.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Review and provide feedback so a final draft can be considered for adoption.

## SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

Review and provide consensus feedback to staff on revisions and responses to the draft Rules of Procedure for City Council.

## **Suggested Rules of Procedure**

### **Part I. Applicability**

#### **Rule 1. Applicability of Rules**

These rules apply to all meetings of the Graham City Council. For purposes of these rules, a meeting of the Council occurs whenever a majority of the Council's Members gather, whether in person or simultaneously by electronic means, to conduct hearings, deliberate, vote, or otherwise transact public business within the Council's real or apparent jurisdiction. The term "majority" as used here and elsewhere in these rules means, unless otherwise specified, a simple majority, that is, more than half.

### **Part II. Quorum**

#### **Rule 2. Quorum**

A majority of the actual membership of the council plus the mayor, excluding vacant seats, shall constitute a quorum. A member who has withdrawn from a meeting without being excused by majority vote of the remaining members present shall be counted as present for purposes of determining whether or not a quorum is present.

### **Part III. Open Meetings**

#### **Rule 3. Remote Participation in Council Meetings**

No Member who is not physically present for a Council meeting may participate in the meeting by electronic means except as may be provided by law.

#### **Rule 4. Meetings to Be Open to the Public**

Except as permitted by Rule 5, all meetings of the Council shall be open to the public, and any person may attend its meetings.

#### **Rule 5. Closed Sessions**

**(a) Motion to Enter Closed Session.** The City Council may enter a closed session from which the public is excluded only upon a motion duly made and adopted in open session. The motion to enter closed session must cite one or more of the permissible bases for closed session listed in paragraph (b) of this rule. A motion to enter closed session under sub-paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(3) must contain the additional information specified in those provisions.

**(b) Bases for Closed Session.** A closed session is permissible under the following circumstances and no others:

(1) To prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of North Carolina or of the United States or that does not constitute a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The motion to enter closed session must name or cite the law that renders the information confidential or privileged.

(2) To prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize, or similar award.

(3) To consult with the City attorney or another attorney employed or retained by the City in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege. If the Council expects to discuss a pending lawsuit with its attorney, the motion to enter closed session must include the names of the parties to the lawsuit.

(4) To discuss matters relating to (a) the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the City or (b) the closure or realignment of a military installation. The Council may reach agreement in closed session on a tentative list of economic development incentives to be offered in negotiations, but the approval of the signing of any economic development contract or commitment and the authorization of the payment of economic development expenditures must take place in open session.

(5) To establish or instruct staff or agents concerning the City's position in negotiating the price or other material terms of an agreement for the acquisition of real property by purchase, exchange, or lease.

(6) To establish or instruct staff or agents concerning the amount of compensation or other material terms of an employment contract.

(7) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, or conditions of appointment or employment of a public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee, except when the individual in question is a Member of the City Council or other public body or is being considered to fill a vacancy on the City Council or other public body. Final action to appoint or employ a public officer or employee must take place in open session.

(8) To hear or investigate a charge or complaint by or against a public officer or employee. Final action discharging an employee or removing an officer must occur in open session.

(9) To plan, conduct, or hear reports concerning investigations of alleged criminal misconduct.

(10) To view a law enforcement recording released pursuant to G.S. 132-1.4A.

(11) On any other basis permitted by law.

**(c) Closed Session Participants.** Unless the Council directs otherwise, the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk may attend closed sessions of the Council. No other person may attend a closed session unless authorized by a majority of the Council.

**(d) Motion to Return to Open Session.** Upon completing its closed session business, the Council shall end the closed session by adopting a duly made motion to return to open session.

## **Rule 6. Meeting Minutes**

**(a) Minutes Required for All Meetings.** The Council must keep full and accurate minutes of all of its meetings, including closed sessions. To be "full and accurate," minutes must record all actions taken by the Council. They should set out the precise wording of each motion and make it possible to determine the number of votes cast for and against each motion. The minutes need not record discussions of the Council, though the Council in its discretion may decide to incorporate such details into the minutes.

**(b) Record of "Ayes" and "Noes."** The minutes shall list each Member by name and record how each Member voted on a particular matter.

**(c) General Accounts of Closed Sessions.** In addition to minutes, the Council must keep a general account of each closed session. The general account must be sufficiently detailed to provide a person not in attendance with a reasonable understanding of what transpired. The Council may combine the minutes and general account of a closed session into one document, so long as the document contains both a complete record of actions taken and the level of detail required for a general account.

**(d) Sealing Closed Session Records.** Minutes and general accounts of closed sessions shall be sealed until unsealed by order of the Council, or if the Council delegates the authority to unseal to one or more staff Members, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Council. The sealed minutes and general account of any closed session may be withheld from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purpose(s) of the closed session.

## **Rule 7. Broadcasting and Recording Meetings**

**(a) Right to Broadcast and Record.** Any person may photograph, film, tape-record, or otherwise reproduce any part of a Council meeting that must take place in open session. Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this rule, any radio or television station may broadcast any such part of a Council meeting.

**(b) Advance Notice.** Any radio or television station that plans to broadcast any portion of a Council meeting shall so notify the [City Clerk/City Manager/administrator] no later than [twenty-four hours] before the meeting. The failure to provide notice is not, by itself, grounds for preventing the broadcast of a Council meeting.

**(c) Equipment Placement.** The [City Manager/administrator] may regulate the placement and use of camera or recording equipment in order to prevent undue interference with a Council meeting, so long as he or she allows the equipment to be placed where it can carry out its intended function. If the [City Manager/administrator] determines in good faith that the equipment and personnel necessary to broadcast, photograph, or record the meeting cannot be accommodated without undue interference to the meeting, and an adequate alternative meeting room is not readily available, the [City Manager/administrator] may require the pooling of the equipment and the personnel operating it.

**Comment:** The open meetings law vests the powers set out in paragraph (c) in the Council. Paragraph (c) delegates these powers to the City Manager or administrator, primarily because, unlike the Council, the City Manager or administrator may act outside of and in advance of a meeting.

**(d) Alternative Meeting Site.** If the news media request an alternative meeting site to accommodate news coverage, and the Council grants the request, the news media making the request shall pay the costs incurred by the City in securing an alternative meeting site.

## **Part IV. Organization of the Council**

### **Rule 8. Organizational Meeting; Selection of Mayor Pro Tempore**

**(a) Scheduling Organizational Meeting.** The Council must hold an organizational meeting following each general election in which Council Members are elected. The organizational meeting must be held either (1) on the date and at the time of the Council's first regular meeting in December following the election or (2) at an earlier date, if any, set by the incumbent Council. The organizational meeting may not be held before municipal election results are officially determined, certified, and published as required by law.

**(b) Oath of Office.** As the first order of **new** business at the organizational meeting, all newly elected Members of the Council must take and subscribe the oath of office set out in Article VI, Section 7, of the North Carolina Constitution. Each Member's oath must be filed with the City Clerk. Although a Member who is not present for the organizational meeting may take the oath of office at another time, every Member must take, subscribe, and file the oath before he or she begins performing any of the duties of the Member's office.

**(c) Selection of Mayor Pro Tempore.** As the second order of business at the organizational meeting, the Council shall elect from among its Members a Mayor Pro Tempore using the procedures specified in Rule 38. The Mayor Pro Tempore shall serve for a term of two-years.

## **Part V. Types of Meetings**

### **Rule 9. Regular Meetings**

**(a) Regular Meeting Schedule.** The Council shall hold a regular meeting on the second Tuesday of each month, except that if a regular meeting day is a legal holiday, the meeting shall be held on the **next business day**. The meeting shall be held at the Council Chamber located at City Hall and begin at 6pm. The Council shall adopt a meeting schedule each year consistent with this rule. A copy of the Council's current meeting schedule shall be filed with the City Clerk and posted on the City's website.

**(b) Change to Meeting Schedule.** Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this rule, the Council may amend its regular meeting schedule to add or delete meetings or to change the date, time, or location of one or more meetings on the schedule. The amended schedule shall be filed with the City Clerk at least seven (7) calendar days before the day of the first meeting held pursuant to the revised schedule and posted on the City's website.

### **Rule 10. Special Meetings**

**(a) Calling Special Meetings.** A special meeting of the Council may be called by the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore, or any two Council Members. A special meeting may also be called by vote of the Council in open session during a regular meeting or another duly called special meeting.

**(b) Notice to the Public.** At least forty-eight hours before a special meeting of the Council, notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be (1) posted on the Council's principal bulletin board

or, if the Council has no such board, at the door of the Council's usual meeting room and (2) delivered, e-mailed, or mailed to each newspaper, wire service, radio station, television station, and person who has filed a written request for notice with the City Clerk. Furthermore, if the Council has a website maintained by at least one City employee, notice of the special meeting's date, time, place, and purpose shall be posted on the website in advance of the meeting.

**(c) Notice to Members.**

*(1) Meeting called by the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore, or any two Council Members.* At least forty-eight hours before a special meeting called by the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore, or any two Council Members, written notice of the meeting stating its date, time, and place, as well as the subjects to be considered, shall be delivered to the Mayor and each Council Member or left at his or her usual dwelling place.

*(2) Meeting called by vote of the Council in open session.* When a special meeting is called by vote of the Council in open session during a regular meeting or another duly called special meeting, the motion or resolution calling the special meeting shall state the meeting's date, time, place, and purpose. Written notice of the special meeting's date, time, place, and purpose shall be mailed or delivered at least forty-eight hours before the meeting to each Council Member not present for the meeting at which the special meeting was called, and to the Mayor if he or she was not present at that meeting.

**(d) Transacting Other Business.** Unless all Members are present or any absent Member has signed a written waiver of notice, only those items of business specified in the notice to Council Members may be taken up at a special meeting. Even when all Members are present or any absent Member has signed a waiver, the Council may take up an item of business not covered by the notice only if the Council first determines in good faith that the item must be discussed or acted upon immediately.

**Rule 11. Emergency Meetings**

**(a) Grounds for Emergency Meeting.** Emergency meetings of the City Council may be called only to address generally unexpected circumstances demanding the Council's immediate attention.

**(b) Calling Emergency Meetings.** There are two methods by which an emergency meeting of the Council may be called.

(1) The Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore, or any two Members of the Council may at any time call an emergency Council meeting by signing a written notice stating the date, time, and place of the meeting and the subjects to be considered. The notice shall be delivered to the Mayor and each Council Member or left at his or her usual dwelling place at least six hours before the meeting.

(2) An emergency meeting may be held when the Mayor and all Members of the Council are present and consent thereto, or when any absent Member has signed a written waiver of notice.

**(c) Notice to Media of Emergency Meetings.** Notice of an emergency meeting shall be given to each local newspaper, local wire service, local radio station, and local television station that has filed a written request with the City Clerk for notice of emergency meetings. To be valid, the request must include the newspaper's, wire service's, or station's telephone number. Notice may be given by telephone, e-mail, or

the same method used to notify Council Members. Notice must be provided immediately after Council Members have been notified and at the expense of the party notified.

## **Rule 12. Recessed Meetings**

**(a) Calling Recessed Meetings.** When conducting a properly called regular, special, or emergency meeting, the Council may recess the meeting to another date, time, or place by a procedural motion made and adopted, as provided in Rule 31, Motion 3, in open session. The motion must state the time (including the date, if the meeting will resume on a different day) and place at which the meeting will reconvene.

**(b) Notice of Recessed Meetings.** If the Council has a website maintained by one or more City employees, notice of the recessed meeting's date, time, and place must appear on the webpage prior to the meeting. No further notice of a properly called recessed meeting is required.

## **Part VI. Agenda**

### **Rule 13. Agenda**

#### **(a) Draft Agenda.**

*(1) Preparation.* The City Clerk shall prepare a draft agenda in advance of each meeting of the City Council.

*(2) Requesting placement of items on draft agenda.* Option A: For a regular meeting, a request to have an item of business placed on the draft agenda must be received by the City Clerk at least **seven** working days before the date of the meeting. The City Clerk must place an item on the draft agenda in response to a Council Member's timely request.

Option B: For a regular meeting, a request to have an item of business placed on the draft agenda must receive a consensus and/or affirmative vote of the City Council at an open meeting at least **seven** working days before the date of the meeting.

*(3) Supplemental information/materials.* If the Council is expected to consider a proposed ordinance or ordinance amendment, a copy of the proposed ordinance or amendment shall be attached to the draft agenda. An agenda package shall be prepared that includes, for each item of business listed on the draft agenda, as much background information on the topic as is available and feasible to provide.

*(4) Delivery to Council Members.* Each Council Member shall receive a hard or electronic copy of the draft agenda and the agenda package. Except in the case of an emergency meeting, the agenda and agenda package shall be furnished to each Member at least **six** calendar days before the meeting.

*(5) Public inspection.* The draft agenda and agenda package shall be available to the public when the document(s) are ready to be or have been circulated.

#### **(b) Adoption of the Agenda.**

*(1) Adoption.* As its first order of business at each meeting, the Council shall review the draft agenda, make whatever revisions it deems appropriate, and adopt a formal agenda for the meeting.

(2) *Amending the agenda.* Both before and after it adopts the agenda, the Council may add or subtract agenda items by majority vote of the Members present and voting, except that:

- the Council may not add to the items stated in the notice of a special meeting unless the requirements in Rule 10(d) are satisfied; and
- only business connected with the emergency may be considered at an emergency meeting.

**(c) Consent Agenda.** The Council may designate part of an agenda for a regular meeting as the consent agenda. Items may be placed on the consent agenda by the person(s) charged with preparing the draft agenda if the items are judged to be noncontroversial and routine. Prior to the Council's adoption of the meeting agenda under subparagraph (b)(1) of this rule, the request of any Member to have an item moved from the consent agenda to **other** business must be honored by the Council. All items on the consent agenda must be voted on and adopted by a single motion.

**(d) Informal Discussion of Agenda Items.** The Council may informally discuss an agenda item even when no motion regarding that item is pending.

#### **Rule 14. Acting by Reference to Agenda or Other Document**

The Council shall not deliberate, vote, or otherwise take action on any matter by reference to the agenda or any other document with the intention of preventing persons in attendance from understanding what action is being considered or undertaken. The Council may deliberate and vote by reference to the agenda or any item on the agenda, including the consent agenda, provided copies of the agenda are available for public inspection at the meeting and are sufficiently worded to enable the public to understand what is being deliberated or acted upon.

#### **Rule 15. Agenda Items from Members of the Public**

If a member of the public wishes to request that the Council include an item on its regular meeting agenda, he or she must submit the request to the City Clerk by the deadline specified in Rule 13(a)(2). The Council in its discretion may place an item on the agenda via consensus or majority vote. The City Council is not obligated to place an item on the agenda merely because such a request has been received.

#### **Rule 16. Order of Business**

Items shall be placed on a regular meeting agenda according to the order of business. The usual order of business for each regular meeting shall be as follows:

- Adoption of the Agenda
- Approval of the Consent Agenda
- Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes
- Public Hearings
- Administrative Reports
- Committee Reports

- Old Business
- New Business
- Public Comments

Without objection, the Mayor may call agenda items in any order most convenient for the dispatch of business.

## **Part VII. Role of the Presiding Officer**

### **Rule 17. The Mayor**

**(a) Presiding Officer.** When present, the Mayor shall preside at meetings of the Council.

**(b) Right to Vote.** The Mayor votes on the same basis as other Council Members, though in no event may the Mayor break a tie on a motion on which he or she has already voted.

**(c) Recognition of Members.** A Member must be recognized by the Mayor (or other presiding officer) in order to address the Council, but recognition is not necessary for an appeal pursuant to Rule 31, Motion 1.

**(d) Powers as Presiding Officer.** As presiding officer, the Mayor is to enforce these rules and maintain order and decorum during Council meetings. To that end, the Mayor may:

- (1) rule on points of parliamentary procedure, to include ruling out of order any motion clearly offered for obstructive or dilatory purposes;
- (2) determine whether a Member or other speaker has gone beyond reasonable standards of courtesy in his or her remarks and entertain and rule on objections from other Members on this ground;
- (3) entertain and answer questions of parliamentary procedure;
- (4) call a brief recess at any time; and
- (5) adjourn in an emergency.

**(e) Appeals of Procedural Rulings.** A Member may appeal a decision made or answer given by the Mayor under subparagraph (d)(1), (2), or (3) in accordance with Rule 31, Motion 1.

### **Rule 18. The Mayor Pro Tempore**

**(a) Presiding in Mayor's Absence.** When present, the Mayor Pro Tempore shall preside over Council meetings in the Mayor's absence with all the powers specified in Rule 17(d).

**(b) Delegation of Mayor's Powers/Duties.** In the Mayor's absence, the Council may confer on the Mayor Pro Tempore any of the Mayor's powers and duties. Likewise, if the Mayor becomes physically or mentally unable to perform the duties of his or her office, the Council may by unanimous vote declare the Mayor incapacitated and confer any of the Mayor's powers and duties on the Mayor Pro Tempore. When the

Mayor announces that he or she is no longer incapacitated, and a majority of the Council concurs, the Mayor shall resume the exercise of his or her powers and duties.

**(c) Duty to Vote.** Even when presiding over a Council meeting, the Mayor Pro Tempore has the same duty as other Members to vote on all questions unless he or she has been excused from voting on a matter in accordance with Rule 28.

#### **Rule 19. Other Presiding Officer**

If both the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore are absent, the Council may elect from among its Members a temporary presiding officer to chair the meeting. While serving as temporary presiding officer, a Member has the powers listed in Rule 17(d). Service as a temporary presiding officer does not relieve a Member of the duty to vote on all questions unless excused from voting pursuant to Rule 28.

#### **Rule 20. When the Presiding Officer Is Active in Debate**

If the Mayor becomes active in debate on a particular proposal, he or she [may] [must] have the Mayor Pro Tempore preside during the Council's consideration of the matter. If the Mayor Pro Tempore is absent or is also actively debating the matter, the Mayor [may] [must] designate another Member to preside until the matter is concluded. Similarly, if the Mayor Pro Tempore or a temporary presiding officer is presiding and takes an active part in debating a topic, he or she [may] [must] designate another Council Member to preside temporarily.

### **Part VIII. Motions and Voting**

#### **Rule 21. Action by the Council**

Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the Council shall act by motion. Any Member may make a motion, including the Mayor.

#### **Rule 22. Second Not Required**

No second is required on any motion.

#### **Rule 23. One Motion at a Time**

A Member may make only one motion at a time.

#### **Rule 24. Withdrawal of Motion**

The Member who introduces a motion may withdraw the motion unless the motion has been amended or the presiding officer has put the motion to a vote.

### **Rule 25. Debate**

The presiding officer shall state the motion and then open the floor to debate, presiding over the debate according to the principles listed below.

- The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first.
- A Member who has not spoken on the issue shall be recognized before a Member who has already spoken.
- To the extent practicable, the debate shall alternate between proponents and opponents of the measure.
- No Member may speak more than twice on the same substantive motion. A Member's first speech on a substantive motion shall be limited to [10] minutes, and any second speech on the same motion shall be limited to [five] minutes. The same rules apply to debate on a procedural motion, except that a Member's first speech shall not exceed [five] minutes, and any second speech shall be limited to [two] minutes.

### **Rule 26. Adoption by Majority Vote**

A motion is adopted if supported by a simple majority of the votes cast, a quorum being present, except when a larger majority is required by these rules or state law.

### **Rule 27. Changing a Vote**

A Member may change his or her vote on a motion at any time before the presiding officer announces whether the motion has passed or failed. Once the presiding officer announces the result, a Member may not change his or her vote without the unanimous consent of the remaining Members present. A Member's request for unanimous consent to change a vote is not in order unless made immediately following the presiding officer's announcement of the result.

### **Rule 28. Duty to Vote**

**(a) Duty to Vote.** Every Council Member must vote except when excused from voting as provided by this rule.

**(b) Grounds for Excusal.** A Member may be excused from voting on a matter involving the Member's own financial interest or official conduct, though not if the proposal in question is one to alter the compensation or allowances paid to Council Members. Members may also be excused from voting when prohibited from voting under G.S. 14-234 (contract providing direct benefit to Member), G.S. 160A-381(d) (legislative zoning decision likely to have a direct, substantial, and readily identifiable financial impact on Member), G.S. 160A-388(e)(2), G.S. 160D-109, or G.S. 160A-109(d).

**(c) Procedure for Excusal.**

*(1) At Member's request.* Upon being recognized at a duly called meeting of the Council, a Member who wishes to be excused from voting shall so inform the presiding officer, who must then submit the matter to a vote of the remaining Members present. If a majority of the remaining Members present vote to excuse the Member, the Member is excused from voting on the matter.

*(2) On Council's initiative.* Even when a Member has not asked to be excused from voting on a matter, a majority of the remaining Council Members present may by motion and vote excuse the Member from voting if grounds for doing so exist so under paragraph (b).

**(d) Consequence of Non-Excused Failure to Vote.** Except as specified in paragraph (e), if a Member who has not been excused from voting fails to vote on a matter, the Member's failure to vote shall be recorded as an affirmative vote, provided:

(1) the Member is physically present in the Council Chamber, or

(2) the Member has physically withdrawn from the meeting without being excused by majority vote of the remaining Members present.

**(e) Mayor's Duty to Vote.** The provisions of this rule apply to the Mayor.

**Rule 29. Voting by Written Ballot**

**(a) Secret Ballots Prohibited.** The Council may not vote by secret ballot.

**(b) Rules for Written Ballots.** The Council may decide by majority vote or unanimous consent to vote on a motion by written ballot. Each Member must sign his or her ballot, and the minutes must record how each Member voted by name. The ballots must be made available for public inspection in the City Clerk's office immediately following the meeting at which the vote took place and remain there until the minutes of that meeting are approved, at which time the ballots may be destroyed.

**Rule 30. Substantive Motions**

A substantive motion is not in order if made while another motion is pending. Once the Council disposes of a substantive motion, it may not take up a motion that presents essentially the same issue at the same meeting, unless it first adopts a motion to reconsider pursuant to Rule 31, Motion 14.

**Rule 31. Procedural Motions**

**(a) Certain Motions Allowed.** The Council may consider only those procedural motions listed in this rule. Unless otherwise noted, each procedural motion may be debated and amended and requires a majority of votes cast, a quorum being present, for adoption.

**(b) Priority of Motions.** The procedural motions set out in this paragraph are listed in order of priority. A procedural motion is not in order so long as another procedural motion of higher priority is pending, except that:

- any procedural motion other than an appeal under Motion 1 is subject to amendment as provided in Motion 12, and
- a motion to call the question (end debate) may be made with regard to any procedural motion in accordance with Motion 9.

When several procedural motions are pending, voting must begin with the procedural motion highest in priority, provided that a motion to amend or end debate on the highest priority motion must be voted on first.

**Motion 1. To Appeal a Ruling of the Presiding Officer.** Any Member may appeal the presiding officer's ruling on whether a motion is in order or on whether a speaker has violated reasonable standards of courtesy. The presiding officer's response to a question of parliamentary procedure may also be appealed by any Member. An appeal is in order immediately after the disputed ruling or parliamentary response and at no other time.

The Member who moves to appeal need not be recognized by the presiding officer, and if timely made, the motion may not be ruled out of order.

**Motion 2. To Adjourn.** This motion may be used to close a meeting. It is not in order if the Council is in closed session. Unlike the motion to adjourn described in Robert's, this motion is debatable and amendable.

**Motion 3. To Recess to a Time and Place Certain.** This motion may be used to call a recessed meeting as permitted under Rule 12. The motion must state the time (including the date, if the meeting will reconvene on a different day) and place at which the meeting will resume. The motion is not in order if the Council is in closed session.

**Motion 4. To Take a Brief Recess.**

**Motion 5. To Follow the Agenda.** This motion must be made at the time an item of business that deviates from the agenda is proposed; otherwise, the motion is out of order as to that item.

**Motion 6. To Suspend the Rules.** To be adopted, a motion to suspend the rules must receive affirmative votes equal to at least two-thirds of the Council's actual Membership, excluding vacant seats but including the Mayor. The Council may not suspend provisions in these rules that are required under state law.

**Motion 7. To Divide a Complex Motion.** This motion is in order whenever a Member wishes to consider and vote on parts of a complex motion separately. The Member who makes this motion must specify how the complex motion will be divided.

**Motion 8. To Defer Consideration.** The Council may defer its consideration of a substantive motion, and any proposed amendments thereto, to an unspecified time. A motion that has been deferred expires unless the Council votes to revive it pursuant to Motion 13 within [100] days of deferral. A

new motion having the same effect as a deferred motion may not be introduced until the latter has expired.

**Motion 9. To End Debate (Call the Previous Question).** If adopted, this motion terminates debate on a pending motion, thereby bringing it to an immediate vote. This motion is not in order until every Member has had an opportunity to speak once on the pending motion.

**Motion 10. To Postpone to a Certain Time.** This motion may be employed to delay the Council's consideration of a substantive motion, and any proposed amendments thereto, until a designated day, meeting, or hour. During the period of postponement, the Council may not take up a new motion raising essentially the same issue without first suspending its rules pursuant to Motion 6.

**Motion 11. To Refer a Motion to a Committee.** The Council may vote to refer a substantive motion to a committee for study and recommendations. While the substantive motion is pending before the committee, the Council may not take up a new motion raising essentially the same issue without first suspending its rules pursuant to Motion 6. If the committee fails to report on the motion within [60] days of the referral date, the Council must take up the motion if asked to do so by the Member who introduced it.

**Motion 12. To Amend.**

**(a) Germaneness.** A motion to amend must concern the same subject matter as the motion it seeks to alter.

**(b) Limit on Number of Motions to Amend.** When a motion to amend is under consideration, a motion to amend the amendment may be made; however, no more than one motion to amend and one motion to amend the amendment may be pending at the same time.

**(c) Amendments to Ordinances.** Any amendment to a proposed ordinance must be reduced to writing before the vote on the amendment.

**Motion 13. To Revive Consideration.** The Council may vote to revive consideration of any substantive motion that has been deferred pursuant to Motion 8, provided it does so within [100] days of its vote to defer consideration.

**Motion 14. To Reconsider.** The Council may vote to reconsider its action on a matter, provided the motion to reconsider is made (a) at the same meeting during which the action to be reconsidered was taken and (b) by a Member who voted with the prevailing side. For purposes of this motion, "the same meeting" includes any continuation of a meeting through a motion to recess to a certain time and place (Motion 3). The motion is not in order if it interrupts the Council's deliberation on a pending matter.

**Motion 15. To Rescind.** The Council may vote to rescind an action taken at a prior meeting provided rescission is not forbidden by law.

**Motion 16. To Prevent Reintroduction for [Six] Months.** This motion may be used to prevent the reintroduction of a failed substantive motion for a time, but it is in order only when made immediately following the substantive motion's defeat. To be adopted, this motion must receive votes equal to at least two-thirds of the Council's actual Membership, excluding vacant seats but including the Mayor.

If this motion is adopted, the ban on reintroduction remains in effect for [six] months or until the Council's next organizational meeting, whichever occurs first.

## **Part IX. Ordinances and Contracts**

### **Rule 32. Introduction of Ordinances**

For purposes of these rules, the "date of introduction" for a proposed ordinance is the date on which the Council first votes on the proposed ordinance's subject matter. The Council votes on the subject matter of a proposed ordinance when it votes on whether to adopt or make changes to the proposed ordinance.

### **Rule 33. Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal of Ordinances**

#### **(a) Adoption of Ordinances.**

(1) *Proposed ordinances to be in writing.* No proposed ordinance shall be adopted unless it has been reduced to writing and distributed to Members before a vote on adoption is taken.

(2) *Adoption on date of introduction.* To be approved on the date of introduction, a proposed ordinance or any action having the effect of an ordinance must receive affirmative votes equal to at least two-thirds of the Council's actual Membership, excluding vacant seats.

(3) *Adoption after date of introduction.* To be approved after the date of introduction, a proposed ordinance or any action having the effect of an ordinance must receive affirmative votes equal to at least a majority of all Council Members not excused from voting on the matter. In calculating the number of affirmative votes necessary for approval, the Council shall count the Mayor.

**(b) Amendment and Repeal of Ordinances.** The same voting requirements that govern the adoption of proposed ordinances also apply to the amendment or repeal of an ordinance.

### **Rule 34. Adoption of the Budget Ordinance**

**(a) Special Rules for the Adoption or Amendment of the Budget Ordinance.** Notwithstanding any provision in the City charter, general law, or local act,

(1) the Council may adopt or amend the budget ordinance at a regular or special meeting of the Council by a simple majority of those Members present and voting, a quorum being present;

(2) no action taken with respect to the adoption or amendment of the budget ordinance need be published or is subject to any other procedural requirement governing the adoption of ordinances or resolutions by the Council; and

(3) the adoption or amendment of the budget ordinance and the levy of taxes in the budget ordinance are not subject to the provisions of any City charter or local act concerning initiative or referendum.

**(b) Notice Requirements for Budget Meetings.** During the period beginning with the submission of the budget to the Council and ending with the adoption of the budget ordinance, the Council may hold any special meetings that may be necessary to complete its work on the budget ordinance. Except for the notice requirements of the open meetings law, which continue to apply, no provision of law concerning the call of special meetings applies during that period so long as

- each Member of the board has actual notice of each special meeting called for the purpose of considering the budget; and
- no business other than consideration of the budget is taken up.

**(c) No Authority for Closed Sessions.** This rule shall not be construed to authorize the Council to hold closed sessions on any basis other than the grounds set out in Rule 5.

#### **Rule 35. Approval of Contracts and Authorization of Expenditures**

**(a) Contracts to be in Writing.** No contract shall be approved or ratified by the City Council unless it has been reduced to writing at the time of the Council's vote.

**(b) Approval of Contracts.** To be approved or ratified, a contract must receive affirmative votes equal to at least a majority of all Council Members not excused from voting on the contract, including the Mayor's vote in the event of a tie.

**(c) Authorization of Expenditure of Public Funds.** The same vote necessary to approve or ratify a contract is required for the Council to authorize the expenditure of public funds, except when the expenditure is authorized pursuant to Rule 34.

#### **Part X. Public Hearings and Comment Periods**

##### **Rule 36. Public Hearings**

**(a) Calling Public Hearings.** In addition to holding public hearings required by law, the Council may hold any public hearings it deems advisable. The Council may schedule hearings or delegate that responsibility to City staff Members, as appropriate, except when state law directs the Council itself to call the hearing. **The City Council delegates scheduling authority of zoning and quasi-judicial matters to staff members.**

**(b) Public Hearing Locations.** Public hearings may be held anywhere within the City or within the county where the City is located.

**(c) Rules for Public Hearings.** The Council may adopt reasonable rules for public hearings that, among other things:

- Fix the maximum time allotted to each speaker at **X** minutes;
- Provide for the designation of spokespersons for groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions;
- Provide for the selection of delegates from groups of persons supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the hearing exceeds the

- capacity of the hall (so long as arrangements are made, in the case of a hearing subject to the open meetings law, for those excluded from the hall to listen to the hearing);
- Provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the hearing.

**(d) Notice of Public Hearings.** Any public hearing at which a majority of the Council is present shall be considered part of a regular or special meeting. Consequently, the relevant notice and related requirements of the open meetings law, as set out in Rules 9 through 12, apply to such hearings. Some statutes mandate additional notice for particular types of hearings, and such notice must be provided together with notice of the meeting during which the hearing will take place.

**(e) Continuing Public Hearings.** The Council may continue any public hearing without further advertisement to a time and place certain, provided the time (including the date, if the hearing will resume on a different day) and place of the continued hearing are announced in open session. Except for hearings conducted pursuant to paragraph (g), if a quorum of the Council is not present for a properly scheduled public hearing, the hearing must be continued until the Council's next regular meeting without further advertisement.

**(f) Conduct of Public Hearings.** At the time appointed for the hearing, the Mayor shall call the hearing to order and proceed to allow public input in accordance with any rules adopted by the Council for the hearing. Unless the Council extends the hearing, when the time allotted for the hearing expires, or when no one wishes to speak who has not done so, the Mayor shall [declare the hearing closed] [entertain a motion to close the hearing], and the Council shall resume the regular order of business.

### **Rule 37. Public Comment Periods**

**(a) Frequency of Public Comment Periods.** The Council must provide at least one opportunity for public comment each month at a regular meeting, except that the Council need not offer a public comment period during any month in which it does not hold a regular meeting.

**(b) Rules for Public Comment Periods.** The Council may adopt reasonable rules for public comment periods that, among other things:

- Fix the maximum time allotted to each speaker at X minutes;
- Provide for the designation of spokespersons for groups supporting or opposing the same positions;
- Provide for the selection of delegates from groups supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the public comment period exceeds the capacity of the hall (so long as arrangements are made for those excluded from the hall to listen to the hearing); and
- Provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the hearing.

**(c) Content-Based Restrictions Generally Prohibited.** The Council may not restrict speakers based on residency or subject matter, as long as their comments pertain to subjects within the Council's real or apparent jurisdiction.

## **Part XI. Appointments and Appointed Bodies**

### **Rule 38. Appointments**

**(a) Appointments in Open Session.** The Council must consider and make any appointment to another body or, in the event of a vacancy on the Council, to its own Membership in open session.

**(b) Nomination and Voting Procedure.** The Council shall use the following procedure to fill a vacancy in the Council itself or in any other body over which it has the power of appointment. All appointments shall be made as provided by law and City ordinances.

**(c) Mayor.** The Mayor may make nominations and vote on appointments under this rule.

**(d) Multiple Appointments.** If the Council is filling more than one vacancy, each Member shall have as many votes in each balloting as there are slots to be filled, and the votes of a majority of the total number of Members voting shall be required for each appointment. No Member may cast more than one vote for the same candidate for the same vacancy during a single balloting.

**(e) Duty to Vote.** It is the duty of each Member to vote for as many appointees as there are appointments to be made, but failure to do so shall not invalidate a Member's ballot.

**(f) Vote by Written Ballot.** The Council may vote on proposed appointments by written ballot in accordance with Rule 29.

### **Rule 39. Committees and Boards**

**(a) Establishment and Appointment.** The Council may establish temporary and standing committees, boards, and other bodies to help carry on the work of City government. Unless otherwise provided by law or the Council, the power of appointment to such bodies lies with the Council.

**(b) Open Meetings Law.** The requirements of the open meetings law apply whenever a majority of an appointed body's Members gather in person or simultaneously by electronic means to discuss or conduct official business. They do not apply to meetings solely among the City's professional staff.

**(c) Procedural Rules.** The Council may prescribe the procedures by which the City's appointed bodies operate, subject to any statutory provisions applicable to particular bodies. In the absence of rules adopted by the Council, an appointed body may promulgate its own procedural rules, so long as they are in keeping with any relevant statutory provisions and generally accepted principles of parliamentary procedure.

## **Part XII. Miscellaneous**

### **Rule 40. Amendment of the Rules**

These rules may be amended at any regular meeting or at any properly called special meeting for which amendment of the rules is one of the meeting's stated purposes. Any amendment to these rules must be consistent with the City charter, any relevant statutes, and generally accepted principles of parliamentary

procedure. To be adopted, a motion to amend these rules must be approved by a majority of the Council's Members, excluding vacant seats but including the Mayor.

**Rule 41. Reference to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised**

The Council shall refer to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised for guidance when confronted with a procedural issue not covered by these rules or state law. Having consulted Robert's, the Mayor shall make a ruling on the issue subject to appeal to the Council under Rule 31, Motion 1.

Adopted this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

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Chelsea Dickey, Mayor

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Renee Ward, City Clerk

CITY OF  
**Graham**  
NORTH CAROLINA



## STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT:	NEW PARK RFQ FOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION
PREPARED BY:	AARON HOLLAND, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

### REQUESTED ACTION:

Authorize City Manager to effectuate a contract with Stewart Inc. to provide services for the design and construction administration for the new park relocation.

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

City Council discussed options for the future of Sesquicentennial Park during the January 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. After a presentation by Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall, it was voted by Council to move forward with the relocation of the park to the City's parking area behind the Graham Historical Museum. City staff was directed to move forward with the necessary engineering Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in order to begin construction.

Bids were received from Stewart Inc. and Concord Engineering & Surveying, Inc (CESI). Credentials from both firms have been reviewed and verified.



### FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding is currently in place for design and engineering service administration.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on review, staff recommends Stewart Inc.

### SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

I move to authorize the City Manager to effectuate a contract with Stewart Inc. to provide services for the design and construction administration for the new park relocation.