

## **Gatlinburg City Commission**

### **August 5, 2025**

### **Meeting Minutes**

The Gatlinburg Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. in the City Council Room. All the members were present. Mayor Mike Werner called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Finance Director Robert Holt led the Invocation.

Mayor Werner then called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the regular meeting of July 22, 2025. Commissioner Jay Horner made a motion to approve the Minutes which was seconded by Commissioner Randy Brackins and then unanimously adopted.

Regarding Reports from Boards and Committees, Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau President/CEO Mr. Chad Netherland reported that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, he and GCVB Staff had several key meetings, including attending the Destination International Annual Conference and met with DVL FINN and the GCVB's public relations agency for planning and television commercials. Mr. Netherland also reported that Gatlinburg.com visits and pageviews were down in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, compared to 2024, and blamed much of this due to the growth of artificial intelligence negating individuals a need to visit the page, however he noted that the Visit Gatlinburg app sessions are up 240 percent compared to 2024, and social media visits are up as well. Mr. Netherland also reported that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, the GCVB had 10 on air interviews in markets and hosted 4 influencers, and hosted 34 events, with over 43,000 attendees, with attendance at the Welcome Center in April was increased but decreased in May and June. Mr. Netherland also reported that Convention Center Sales are up in every metric, including a 17 percent increase in food and beverage and a 211 increase on future bookings. Mr. Netherland also reported a national travel industry trend report, which shows that travel down in communities near national parks is down six percent in 2025. Commissioner Chad Reagan asked if the increase in marketing for the 50<sup>th</sup> annual Independence Day Parade led to increased attendance and Mr. Netherland responded that attendance to the parade appeared to be down and is a link back to the decrease of visitation that the area has seen in 2025.

#### **The City Manager reported and/or requested:**

- (1) That earlier this morning at the 85th annual Tennessee Municipal League Conference, the City was awarded TML's Excellence in Municipal Governance Award for the Animal-Resistant Dumpster Program, which the City began implementing early in 2024, along with its approach for the management of the black bear population. The City Manager further explained that this award would not be possible if not for the work of our Public Works Department and Sanitation Department for their efforts to identify solutions for securing garbage and eliminating trash as a food source for bears. The City Manager also said that the award also recognized the outreach efforts of the Gatlinburg Police Department and Gatlinburg Fire Department to educate the public on taking necessary steps to

help prevent bear encounters and the need to secure garbage. The City Manager further stated that this award was made possible thanks to the support of each City Commissioner, who recognized the value of funding the Animal-Resistant Dumpster Program, and by former City Manager Cindy Cameron Ogle, who helped shape the program's early development; and,

- (2) That he wanted to commend the Gatlinburg Fire Department and Gatlinburg Police Departments for holding successful Kids Camps the last two weeks and that these outreach programs are an important community initiative that these Departments have been doing for quite some time.

### **Old Business:**

**ORDINANCE NUMBER 2640, AN ORDINANCE MAKING AND FIXING THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY OF GATLINBURG FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026, AND CARRY FORWARD APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE PRIOR YEAR ENCUMBRANCES, SECOND READING ( Passed First Reading 7/22/2025).**

Item A under Old Business was Ordinance Number 2640, an Ordinance making and fixing the annual appropriation for the several departments of the City of Gatlinburg for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, and carry forward appropriations for the prior year encumbrances, Second Reading Passed First Reading 7/22/2025). Commissioner Chad Reagan made a motion to adopt the Ordinance on second reading which was seconded by Vice Mayor Kirby Smith. The motion to adopt the Ordinance on second reading was unanimously approved.

### **New Business:**

**ORDINANCE NUMBER 2641, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE GATLINBURG ZONING ORDINANCE, BEING ORDINANCE NO. 830, AND FURTHER BEING AN ORDINANCE TO RECLASSIFY PARCEL 7, GROUP E, OF TAX MAP 126I LOCATED AT 1456 LAUREL ROAD IN THE CITY, FROM R1-A (LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) DISTRICT TO R-1 (LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) DISTRICT, FIRST READING (Passed Planning Commission on 7/24/2025).**

Item A under New Business was Ordinance Number 2641, an Ordinance to amend the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance, being Ordinance No. 830, and further being an Ordinance to reclassify Parcel 7, Group E, of Tax Map 126I located at 1456 Laurel Road in the City, from R1-A (Low Density Residential) District to R-1 (Low Density Residential) District, First Reading (Passed Planning Commission). Commissioner Reagan made a motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading which was seconded by Commissioner Brackins. The

Planning Director explained that this parcel is 4.01 acres in size and is a single family home that is on the parcel. The Planning Director further explained that this proposed rezoning was approved by Planning Commission at its July 24, 2025, meeting and the proposal is not a concern in regards to spot zoning. Commissioner Horner asked if the proposed rezoning was just one lot and the Planning Director replied that was correct. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading was unanimously approved.

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 1029, A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING UPDATED SECTIONS TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES RULES AND REGULATIONS DATED SEPTEMBER 1, 2025.**

Item B under New Business was Resolution Number 1029, a Resolution approving and adopting updated sections to the Human Resources Rules and Regulations dated September 1, 2025. Commissioner Reagan made a motion to adopt the Resolution which was seconded by Commissioner Horner. The City Manager stated that a memorandum from the Human Resources Director was enclosed in the agenda package along with a synopsis of the proposed changes to the City's Human Resources Manual. The City Manager explained that these changes were discussed and reviewed during a Workshop Meeting on June 5, 2025, and the Budget Presentation on July 17, 2025. Following these comments, the Resolution was unanimously adopted.

**ORDINANCE NUMBER 2642, A PROPERTY TAX LEVYING ORDINANCE FOR THE CITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026, First Reading.**

Item C under New Business was Ordinance Number 2642, a Property Tax Levying Ordinance for the City for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, First Reading. Commissioner Horner made a motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading which was seconded by Commissioner Brackins. The City Manager explained that this Ordinance was the property tax levying Ordinance for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year and that the City's property tax rate remains the same at 12.57 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. Following these comments, the motion to adopt the Ordinance on first reading was unanimously adopted.

**UNSCHEDULED ITEMS:**

**Commissioner Jay Horner**

- (1) Stated that wanted to congratulate the City on the Tennessee Municipal League Award for the Dumpster program; and,
- (2) Asked if the Public Works Director could inspect some of the trees on King Road and if trees on the City right-of-way were in danger of falling that they be removed.

**Commissioner Randy Brackins**

(1) Stated that he wanted to thank the City employees who had did recent work on Hidden Hills Road, including those from the Utilities and Street Departments.

**Vice Mayor Kirby Smith**

(1) Stated that he wanted to welcome Mayor Werner back from his recent Mission Trip from Africa.

**Mayor Mike Werner**

(1) Stated that he wanted to thank everyone who was in prayer for him and the group from First Baptist Church on the Mission Trip to Africa, where he said that the group participated in three food distributions, installed one well, and built a small church.

There being no further business to come before the City Commission, Commissioner Reagan made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Horner seconded the motion which was unanimously adopted.



Greg Patterson, City Recorder  
/sb



Mike Werner, Mayor