CITY OF LAVONIA COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING – MINUTES

November 3, 2025

5:30 PM

Present: Mayor Courtney Umbehant
Councilman – Eddie Floyd
Councilman – Michael Schulman
Councilman - Jeremy Madden
Councilman - Andrew Murphy

Attorney: Jay Doss

Media: M. J. Kneizer– WLHR
Charlie Eavenson – Franklin County Citizen

Staff: City Manager - Charles Cawthon
Asst. City Manager - Robert Ogburn
City Clerk – Angela V. Greer
Police Chief – Shane Edmisten
Mainstreet - Ashley Rose Umbehant
Mainstreet Asst. – Amorette Johnson

Item 1. **Call to Order**:
Mayor Courtney Umbehant called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Item 2. **Invocation and Pledge of Alliance to the American flag:** led by Councilman Jeremy Madden.

Item 3. **Consent Agenda Items** & **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion by Michael Schulman, seconded by Jeremy Madden to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows. Motion carried.

a) Confirmation of Quorum.

b) Approval of the November Meeting Agenda as presented.

c) Approval of Minutes: October 6, 2025 - Regular Council Meeting as presented.

d) Approval of the October 21, 2025 – Work Session Minutes as presented.

e) Approval of the October 2025 Financial Report as presented.

DRAFT

Item 4. **Legal:**

a) Motion by Jermey Madden, seconded by Andrew Murphy to approve the second reading for a sign variance for RaceTrac, Inc. from Mr. Kirk Ellis requesting to replace the existing sign with a modern digital sign measuring 39 feet in height and 149.41 square feet in area. Motion carried.

b) Motion by Eddie Floyd, seconded by Michael Schulman to approve the second reading for a rezoning from Mr. Ken Gary - Der Sams, Inc. requesting a zoning change from R-1A – (Single Family Residential District – Low Density) to R-1B – (Single Family High Density) for 41 Mason St., Map and Parcel L007/074, 2.794 for a 10-lot residential subdivision. Motion carried.

c) Motion by Jeremy Madden, seconded by Andrew Murphy to approve the proposed 2026 Budget as a first read as presented. (A copy of the FY2026 Budget may be obtained at the City Hall. Motion carried.

Item 5. **Chief Edmisten – Awards & Certification Presentation:**

Chief Edmisten recognizes the following Officers for completion of Advanced Professional Certifications. Chief Edmisten was very proud of the Officers, and this reflected the departments dedication to continue professional development and enhancing the skills necessary to serve the citizens of Lavonia.

This year, the following Lavonia Police Department officers earned one or more of these certifications:

- Officer Steve Nicely - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory
- Corporal Crawford - Intermediate
- Corporal Segars - Intermediate
- Corporal Merck - Intermediate, Advanced
- Investigator Justin Parten - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory
- Sergeant Jonathan Seay - Intermediate
- Sergeant Jay Thomas - Intermediate
- Sergeant Bobbi Johns - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory
- Lieutenant Mikenzie Phillips - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory
- Lieutenant Wayne Mitchum - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory, Management, Executive
- Lieutenant Josh Akins - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory, Management, Executive
- Deputy Chief Daniel Carson - Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory,

Management, Executive

Chief Edmisten also advised that two of the Command Staff Officers participated in the FBI-LEEDA Trilogy leader development program for law enforcement professionals. Deputy Chief Daniel Carson and Officer McKensie Phillips has successfully completed all three courses and have received the highly honored FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Award.

Item 6. **Mayor's Report:**

Thank You:

I want to thank each of you that have reached out to check on me or has offered prayers, words of encouragement, visits, and even meals. I am happy to say that I am cancer free and feel great.

LES:

Today I had the privilege to visit Lavonia Elementary School and speak to the second and third grade classes about local government. They had great questions and seemed excited. It is refreshing to be reminded that our future is bright because our future is right there in those classrooms.

STEELWORKS:

Last week I had the opportunity to meet with project managers from across the state as they met at Steelworks. I want to extend a personal thank you to Steelworks and the Franklin County Industrial Building Authority for hosting them.

WATER PLANT MOU:

To ensure that I am clear in my remarks, I want to read to you the letter that I am going to send Franklin County and the Hart County Water Authority to clarify our position to those governing bodies.

Mayor Umbehant read the following letter:

DRAFT

I want to address the potential Memorandum of Understanding between the City Lavonia, the Franklin Co. BOC, and the Hart County Water Authority concerning the building of a large-scale water treatment plant. The inclusion of Franklin County and the Hart County Water Authority are natural in this process as each are supplied water currently by the City of Lavonia. Although the MOU has not yet been written and there needs to be interest and issues presented from all three prospective entities, I want to be certain that all parties understand the base issues that must be included.

The term "partnership" refers to each government partnering cooperatively to apply for grant funding. The MOU would not bind any party to financial contribution in the ultimate project. Each party would make the decision as to whether to ultimately contribute at whatever time the project becomes "shovel ready." This MOU is simply about participation in finding funds.

This potential project is in **NO WAY** associated with the current two projects that Lavonia has going with our current water treatment plant. Our current projects will maximize our ability to produce the amount of water in our current allocation. It will take us at least two years to complete these projects. I believe that the engineer's timeline is not realistic nor advisable. It is my belief that the discussed new plant would not be able to be shovel ready for a minimum of eight to ten years. Honestly, that may be ambitious, because a new allocation would have to be involved.

Here is the benefit to each "partner" for participating in the ultimate project: A new plant would accomplish water supply assurances to all 3 entities. The City of Lavonia would have a large production water plant that is owned and operated solely by the City of Lavonia. Franklin County and the Hart County Water Authority would know that in the future, their rates would not arbitrarily increase, nor would their capacity be limited below the contracted minimum for the number of years specified in the agreement.

It is my hope that we can all partner for the sake of grant applications on this potential project, as water needs are paramount to all or our citizens. The next step would be for Franklin County Commissioners and the Hart County Water Authority Board Members to decide if there are any items that you would want to see included in a memorandum of understanding. I look forward to hearing from you both soon.

Best Regards,

DRAFT

Item 7. **City Manager's Report:**

No report.

Item 8. **Final Comments:**

None

Item 9. **Adjourn:**

Mayor Umbehant adjourned the meeting at 5:51 P.M.

DRAFT

Upcoming Meetings:

November 18, 2025 - Work Session @ 6:00 PM (If needed)

November 24, 2025 - Planning and Zoning @ 5:30 P.M. (If needed)

December 1, 2025 – City of Lavonia – Regular Council Meeting @ 5:30 P.M.

_____ _____

Courtney Umbehant, Mayor | Angela V. Greer, City Clerk

DRAFT