Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 7, 2026, at 6:30 PM
City Hall

1. **Call to Order**

   Mayor Winecoff called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

   Attendance:
   Mayor Jeff Winecoff
   Commissioner Kim Sherwood
   Commissioner Todd Ausborn
   Commissioner Teagan Hall
   City Manager Matthew Kirkland
   Assistant Manager Gordon Hargrove
   Police Chief Kevin Smith
   Parks and Rec. Director, Sara Goodwin
   Finance Director, Brandon Stevens
   City Clerk, Tanya Shannon
   Planner, Nicole Morgan
   Zoning Technician, Suzanne Price
   Stormwater Engineer, Jim Stachura
   Absent: Commissioner Justin Lovin

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

   The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

   A motion was made to approve the agenda by Commissioner Hall with the following amendments:

   Under agenda item 12, Old Business: Add "Text Amendment - UDO Article 7, Part V: Venus Flytrap, Pitcher Plant & Sundew Protection & Notification; Appendix A: Definitions; and Appendix B: Submission Requirements."

   Under New Business, add agenda item 13.5: "Consideration of funding the Development Services Director Position for the FY26-27 Budget."

   Remove the Proclamation presentation for Mr. Kerr, who was unable to attend the meeting.

   The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. **Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.**

4. **Potential Conflict of Interest/Association Disclosure**

   No BOC member indicated any conflict or association with any item on this evening's agenda

5. Special Recognition

Mayor Winecoff honored retiring City Manager Hargrove by presenting him with a Proclamation and a plaque in recognition of his dedicated service to the City.

6. Proclamation in Recognition of Steven Kerr – (removed from agenda).

7. BSL Friends of Parks and Recreation: Installing Trail Cameras at the Venus Flytrap Site presentation.

Amber Townsend, representing the BSL Friends of Parks & Recreation and the North American Sarracenia Conservancy (NASC), formally requests permission from the Boiling Spring Lakes board to install cellular trail cameras around the Community Center pond to protect relocated Venus flytrap plants from poaching. Key Details: Cameras are needed due to ongoing poaching, as confirmed by local police. The city will not bear any costs or responsibilities for the cameras; all expenses, including installation, monitoring, and maintenance, will be covered by NASC and volunteers. Cameras are solar-powered, cellular (no Wi-Fi needed), and secured with cable locks to deter theft. Funding for the cameras comes from a donation by the BSL Motel owner. Placement and setup will be managed by NASC and the NCPCP Preserve Manager. Cameras will monitor only the planted areas and approaches, not public spaces such as benches, the disc golf course, or the nature trail. Monitoring will be conducted by select volunteers and NASC board members, with incidents reported immediately to local law enforcement and wildlife officers. Up to four cameras may be installed, with a minimum of two; dummy cameras may also be used for deterrence. Request: Consideration by the board to approve the installation swiftly to enhance protection for the Venus flytraps. If approved, the cameras will be installed and monitored by trained volunteers, with clear protocols for reporting suspicious activity to ensure both plant protection and community privacy.

Commissioner Ausborn moved to approve the Friends of Parks and Recreation's request to install trail cameras at Venus Flytrap locations to protect the Venus Flytrap plants. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall. ***Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.***

8. <u>Public Comments</u>

1. Leanne McLaughlin, Cedar Rd. addressed the board to express her concerns about the clear-cutting of 100 acres of forest along Highway 87. She outlined the environmental consequences, including the loss of wildlife habitat, increased erosion and stormwater runoff, and the loss of benefits such as carbon storage, water quality protection, and temperature moderation. Ms. McLaughlin noted that the land has remained largely unrestored for nearly two years, exacerbating risks to wetlands and local ecosystems. She also criticized the lack of transparency and adherence to permitting requirements, highlighting private meetings between board members and the developer that excluded public input. She stressed the importance of open government, public trust, and ensuring that development proposals are reviewed publicly and with community input. She clarified that she is not opposed to development or property rights but expects proposals to follow established procedures. Finally, Ms. McLaughlin called for respectful, professional dialogue among city officials and urged them to put the community's needs above personal disagreements. She emphasized the need for leaders to foster unity, maintain public trust, and work collaboratively for the good of Boiling Spring Lakes.

2. Diana Tursi, Palmetto Rd., raised several concerns about the city's emergency response plan: She expressed disappointment with the mayor's claim that emergency management is mainly a county

responsibility, noting that county documents indicate cities also have significant responsibilities. Ms. Tursi reviewed the city's emergency response plan, last updated in 2018, and noted that it explicitly grants the mayor and city board authority and responsibility for emergency response planning and annual updates. She criticized the plan for not being updated to reflect recent road closures, population growth, or changes in evacuation routes. The plan covers not just natural disasters but also issues like derailments and dam failures, which are direct city responsibilities. She noted problems with the Code Red emergency notification system and difficulty accessing relevant information on the city's website, especially for residents who do not use social media or are new to the area. Ms. Tursi recommended either formally changing the city's responsibilities in the emergency plan or updating and strengthening it to reflect current conditions, improve communication, and provide training for city staff. She emphasized the need for better communication channels beyond social media and Code Red, to ensure all residents are informed during emergencies. Overall, Ms. Tursi urged the city to take a more proactive and accountable approach to emergency preparedness and public communication.

3. Ashley Turner, Pike Rd. expressed concern about recent difficulties obtaining permits for removing trees in the city, citing federal bureaucracy and a lack of support after federal staff layoffs. He explained that the current permitting process is dysfunctional, harming builders and potentially putting over 300 families out of work. Mr. Turner urged the town to streamline lot clearing, zoning, and related processes, and to update the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to better serve local needs. He called on the city administration to work closely with builders and developers to resolve these issues and emphasized that fixing these operational challenges is essential for the town's progress. Mr. Turner clarified that these permitting issues have been ongoing since May and stressed that local builders try to comply with regulations but need more support from the city.

4. Shannon Van Deren, Pine Lake Dr., expressed surprise and concern over the elimination of the Development Services Director position, noting it contradicted previous plans to have a planner, tech, and director. She questioned the impact on employee motivation and retention and raised concerns that the city manager's expanded responsibilities could dilute effectiveness. Ms. Van Deren was worried about who is currently managing the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and ensuring compliance with permits, ordinances, and fees, especially given possible gaps in oversight that could affect federal and state grants. She questioned the need to spend $30,000 on an engineering agreement for a grant proposal, especially since the city has previously succeeded with grant applications and has commissioners who claim grant-writing expertise. She also inquired about switching to a new engineering firm. She supported calls for greater attention to the city's emergency plan, noting discrepancies in the information provided at prior meetings and expressing a personal interest in staying informed, especially as a resident new to hurricane-prone areas. She praised the attention to road improvements on Miller Road due to safety concerns and recommended better use of and greater visibility of the city hall's electronic sign for public information. She would like to see that the minutes of the Water and Sewer Steering Committee meeting are published and made available to the public.

5. Hank Troscianic, 542 N. Shore. Mr. Troscianic voiced strong concerns about the US Fish and Wildlife Service's recent actions, specifically their decision to halt building and development activities. He questioned the agency's definitions and motives, arguing that the concept of "take" is subjective and that their regulations are harming the ability of people to build homes and start families. He described the agency as unresponsive and unwilling to provide clear answers on endangered species populations or permit processes, resulting in significant delays and uncertainty for developers and homebuyers. Mr. Troscianic emphasized that progress should be measured by responsible adaptation and building within the environment, not simply by the number of rooftops, and criticized the agency for moving the regulatory "goalposts." He also highlighted the economic impact, including increased costs, higher taxes, and unbuildable lots, and suggested that

the city's infrastructure and tax base are negatively affected by the shutdown. Throughout his comments, he called for clearer communication, accountability, and practical solutions, such as considering a city-wide sewer system and exploring habitat mitigation strategies. He concluded by offering his support for advocacy efforts to address these issues.

6. Kendall Fincher, Sanford Rd. Mr. Fincher noted that many of his points had already been addressed by Mr. Turner and Mr. Troscianic. He introduced himself as a small builder in the area, having constructed about 12 houses over the past four years. After taking a brief break to spend time with his children as they graduated, he is now eager to resume work but is unable to obtain permits for any of his lots. He remarked, somewhat humorously, that it now seems easier to get a permit in Oak Island, something he never expected to say. Mr. Fincher also emphasized that he is a lifelong resident of the area and has experience building in various locations throughout the county. He expressed frustration that, despite encountering red-cockaded woodpeckers throughout the county, he has only faced permitting issues here. He questioned why such strict requirements are imposed locally and concluded by leaving that concern with the board.

7. Paul Brosseau, Pinehurst Rd., commented that eight years ago, he came here and asked about developing a strategic plan. Since then, no strategic plan has been created. He expressed hope that the city can finally move forward and establish a strategic plan. Mr. Brosseau also noted that the council used to receive monthly updates on the dam project's progress, but those updates have not been provided for a long time. He requested that regular updates be reinstated. Additionally, Mr. Brosseau emphasized that residents expect their elected officials and city staff to demonstrate professional conduct, integrity, ethics, respectful communication, honesty, and transparency. He remarked that these meetings should not be used for finger-pointing or negative personal attacks, and he respectfully asked that this be addressed.

9. **<u>Consent Agenda</u>**

9.1 Approval of BOC Minutes
May 28 Closed Session (sealed)
June 2 Regular Meeting
June 4 Budget Workshop
June 18 Citizens Forum 26-0618
June 22 Budget Hearing
9.2 Notice of Utility Combination and Consent Request – Duke Energy (Agreement unchanged; name updated only)
9.3 Public Works
9.4 Public Safety / Animal Control
9.5 Parks & Recreation Department
9.6 Finance Department
9.7 Planning, Zoning & Code Enforcement
9.8 Building Inspections
9.9 Stormwater Department

Commissioner Sherwood moved to approve the Consent Agenda, with an amendment to the June 22 Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes to remove the section above the call to order and to verify the vote count. Seconded by Commissioner Hall. ***Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.***

10. <u>Committee/ Board Reports and Minutes</u>
10.1 BSL Fire/Rescue -no report
10.2 Planning Board – no report
10.3 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Ms. Conley's report covered recent updates from committees and public feedback. The facilities committee identified maintenance issues at Muse Park (damaged basketball court padding) and

at Mirror Lake Park (a loose bench board and flaking paint). The communications committee reported positive community feedback and ongoing efforts to address challenges. During public comments, concerns about the dam's status were redirected to a recent Citizens Forum. Questions about community input on Parks and Recreation programs were addressed by Sara, who explained the ongoing use of surveys to gather resident feedback and identify potential volunteers, with plans to refine this process after Summer Camp. The Spring Fling event was deemed successful, and next year's will again be held on the last Saturday in May. Safety concerns regarding a building on a golf course property were discussed, with an update on demolition costs and a reminder that No Trespassing signs help manage liability.

10.4 **Special Events Committee**

Chair Hogan reported that they are finalizing our Mayor's Cup Golf Tournament, which is on Saturday, August 8th. We have already filled up with players. Sponsor checks are coming in nicely. So far, everything is going as planned, as it did last year. We have started planning for our Fall Festival on Saturday, October 17th. We are looking for scary scenes for the haunted trail. Anyone interested, please get in touch with us on our Facebook page or at City Hall.

10.5 **Library Commission**

Chair Kuzian reported that the Library Commission received $36 in donations at the Venus Fly Trap Festival and thanked everyone who contributed. The Library is now open on the first and third Saturdays of the month, from 10 am to 2 pm. She said attendance has been good so far. She thanked everyone who comes, supports, and checks out the library. A calendar with dates for library committee members to staff the building has been posted on the library office door. A list of key library responsibilities will be prepared and kept in the library office. Committee members went on a book-buying trip in May and purchased twenty-one books. She said to check out the new book display. She announced there will not be a meeting in July.

11. City Manager's Monthly Report

City Manager Mr. Kirkland began his report by expressing gratitude to everyone he has met and by sharing his enthusiasm for working with the city. He acknowledged the support from his predecessor, Mr. Hargrove, and he is committed to continuing the city's progress.

Key Updates:

Dam Projects:

- North Lake Dam has received a modified Certificate of Final Approval, signaling near completion. Minor non-safety issues and lake bed clearing remain in progress.
- Upper Lake Dam has reopened West Dam Road for traffic, with new speed bumps and signage for safety. Final approval is pending but expected soon.
- Pine Lake Dam site work has resumed, with a staff coordination meeting scheduled for the 18th to provide a more detailed update next month.

Transportation Projects:

At the County RPO prioritization meeting, the city's highway project for turn lanes on Highway 87 scored the highest in the region. This increases the project's chances for funding through the State Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP). While bike and pedestrian projects were not discussed, the strong highway project score may provide future funding opportunities.

US Fish and Wildlife:

The city received a letter from the US Fish and Wildlife and met with their representatives. The agency recommends using its online Information for Planning and Consultation program, which Mr. Kirkland found complicated. He is consulting the city attorney, researching potential regulatory relief, and awaiting further legal analysis. He seeks the board's direction on how to proceed with a potential UDO amendment.

Community Engagement:
Mr. Kirkland praised the community center and Parks and Recreation department after attending a successful community lunch and summer camp event.

Strategic Planning:
He highlighted a strategic planning workshop in Leland on August 25-26, encouraging board members to attend and asking for confirmations to arrange registration.

Mr. Kirkland concluded by inviting further engagement from the board and community as he works to advance city priorities.

12. **Old Business**

12.1 **Text Amendment - UDO Article 7, Part V: Venus Flytrap, Pitcher Plant & Sundew Protection & Notification; Appendix A: Definitions; and Appendix B: Submission Requirements**.

Mr. Kirkland explained that at the June meeting, the board reviewed an ordinance focused on the preservation and conservation of Venus flytraps. A request was made to include pitcher plants and sundews, and staff has done an excellent job updating the ordinance accordingly. This is the only change to the proposed ordinance. If the board supports the amendment, it may proceed to approve it.

Commissioner Ausborn moved to approve the ordinance amending UDO Article 7, Part V: Venus Flytrap, Pitcher Plant, and Sundew Protection and Notification; Appendix A: Definitions; and Appendix B: Submission Requirements. Commissioner Sherwood seconded. ***Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.***

13. New **Business**

13.1 **Auditor Contractor Agreement**

Mr. Stevens explained that every year the Board of Commissioners must adopt the contract for the audit firm that works with the city on the prior fiscal year(s) audit. Once adopted, it will go to the auditors and the LGC for approval. The financial impact will be $39,500, including the Audit Fee and the preparation of the city's financial statements. This is a $2,000 increase compared to prior years.

Commissioner Hall moved to approve the FY 2026 audit contract with THOMPSON, PRICE, SCOTT, ADAMS & CO, P.A. Seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. ***Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.***

13.2 **Withers Ravenel Task Order**

Mr. Kirkland explained that this is a task order to approve a contract with Withers Ravenel to provide consulting assistance to the city for a FEMA BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) grant application. The BRIC program provides federal funds to states, local governments, tribes, and territories for proactive hazard mitigation projects that build community resilience. This contract is intended to help the city seek grant funding for the Holly Walnut and Redwood stormwater project. The application is due soon, and staff recommends approving the task order so the application can be submitted on time. While the cost is $30,000, if the city receives BRIC funding, these application costs will be reimbursed.

Mr. Kirkland said he met with representatives from Withers Ravenel, who were optimistic about the project's potential. BRIC funding is highly competitive, and although he can't guarantee approval, the process is technical. FEMA grants, especially BRIC grants, require detailed analysis and ongoing administration. We've managed FEMA funding before, and both Mr. Hargrove and he believe this is money well spent on securing expert assistance with the application.

Commissioner Sherwood agreed with Ms. Van Deren regarding the $40,000 already paid to McGill for preparing the grant application, noting that much of the work has been completed. She explained that they met with McGill, submitted the LOI, and provided most of the required information that day. She also noted that the charges include both the LOI and the application and expressed concern that $30,000 is a significant amount.

Commissioner Ausborn moved to approve the agreement for Task Order No. 2, submitted by Withers Ravenel, to provide services related to the Holly/Walnut/Redwood Storm Water Project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall. Aye: Mayor Winecoff, Commissioner Ausborn, and Hall. Nay: Commissioner Sherwood. ***Vote 3-1; Motion Carried.***

13.2 Speed limit discussion on N. Shore Dr.

Numerous concerns and reports of speeding on N. Shore Drive have been received, given that the speed limit there is 25 mph. Mr. Kirkland will work with Chief Smith and staff to evaluate the situation and determine what action is needed.

13.3 Appointments to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (1 member and 1 alternate member) - 3-year terms

There were three applicants: Jason Biggs, Cheri Funk, and Luke Hahn. Mr. Hahn withdrew his application prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Hall moved to appoint Jason Biggs to a three-year term and to hold the appointment for the alternate until further notice. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. ***Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.***

13.4 Consideration of funding the Development Services Director Position for the FY26-27 Budget.

Commissioner Hall moved to fund the Development Services Director position, noting that, given the city's growth and the appointment of a new city manager, this role is needed to support daily operations. She recommended that the position also focus on updating and streamlining the UDO, managing grants, and leading all FEMA-related projects and documentation. Commissioner Sherwood seconded the motion.

The board discussed salary matters. Mr. Stevens stated that it's about a $36,000 increase in the budget, including benefits, the remaining planner, and the development services director position. $36,000 is what the budget would require to fund that position and maintain balance. You would take whatever's left from contingency and still have a little bit left from the fund balance appropriation. A budget amendment would be needed. Mr. Stevens provided the Board with a spreadsheet showing how the budget could be amended.

Mayor Winecoff asked for more time to review the details and proposed delaying the decision until next month.

After a motion and a second were made on the floor, a vote was taken. All in favor of funding for the Development Services position for the FY 26-27 Budget: Aye: Commissioner Hall, Sherwood, and Ausborn. Nay: Mayor Winecoff. ***Vote 3-1; Motion Carried.***

14. Mayor and Commissioners Report

Commissioner Sherwood said she had talked to the City Manager, Mr. Kirkland, and had a great conversation with him, and she is really excited about him working with us. She said she did mention the SOP (standard operating procedure) for the dams. She said that Mr. Kirkland will begin working on that, and Mr. Stachura may already be working on it. She said there are some classes/videos that Dam Safety offers, and they're on the back of the permit. Anyone can go there and take those classes, which are educational for maintaining and operating those dams. She also said that she would like to respectfully make a motion to the Mayor and Board of Commissioners that the board place on the agenda at next month's meeting a discussion regarding the city pursuing legislation, with documented communication to our state leaders. She said this legislation would authorize the City of Boiling Spring Lakes to retain the use of the interest earned on the state's 22 million of dam reconstruction appropriations. She said this move is required and must be in place in order for the city to utilize any of these funds. Allowing the city to use these accrued interest funds will provide an opportunity to address road damage and other infrastructure impacts resulting from the dam reconstruction project without requiring additional state funding. She said this approach would help maximize the benefit of the original appropriation and further support the city's recovery and infrastructure restoration efforts. She thanked the board for their consideration and said she believes that the total was close to 2 million, and she said that is a motion. The motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Ausborn reported that he has collaborated with Ms. Morgan on finished floor elevations (FFEs) and has also consulted Mr. Kirkland. He proposed addressing the FFE issue in two phases. Ms. Morgan stated that, based on previous discussions, staff guidance was to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. She noted that staff has begun updating the flood ordinance to align with the new state model, which will establish minimum FFE standards. Additionally, staff is reviewing the latest flood advisory map and the Web Soil Survey. Ms. Morgan requested direction from the board regarding their preferred approach to FFEs.

Commissioner Ausborn felt that the board reached consensus on requiring 24-inch FFEs for all recognized flood-hazard areas, not solely those identified by FEMA on the flood map. He clarified that all X zones would require 16-inch FFEs. Mayor Winecoff added that the 24-inch standard was also discussed for areas adjacent to flood zones, including those near lakes. He further noted that some locations outside the X zone experienced flooding during the recent 22-inch rainstorm.

Commissioner Ausborn said he met with Fish and Wildlife last week about the Tree Ordinance, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and permitting issues. He shared that the agency could not answer their questions and felt the builders' frustration. He learned the local woodpecker population dropped from 24% to 9%. Winnabow now has more of these birds, even after ending their zoning rules, and no one could explain why. Fish and Wildlife said they lack the authority to make policy changes. Efforts are now underway with state representatives and in Washington to address the problem.

Mayor Winecoff said Fish and Wildlife started a new program, but it has many problems and doesn't work. They also don't have a short-term solution. He asked for a temporary fix so people could get permits, but Fish and Wildlife replied that they would not allow people to remove trees from their yards, even if necessary. When he asked if this meant taking over people's property, they had no answer. He added that Representative Rouzer's team is working hard on the issue.

Mr. Kirkland said he got a message today from a Fish and Wildlife field representative. He hasn't met with them yet, but he is also talking with the city attorney. He said he needs direction from the board if they want staff to look into changing the Ordinance for some relief. The board agreed to have staff and the Planning Board work on an amendment to the UDO.

15. Announcements

15.1 July 10th Concert at Spring Lake - with the Doorsmen

15.2 July 29th Mammogram Bus at the Community Center- call Amy at (910) 363-0018 for more information.

16. Adjournment

Commissioner Ausborn moved to adjourn the meeting, and was seconded by Commissioner Hall**.** **Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.**

– **8:00 p.m.**

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Jeff Winecoff, Mayor

Attest:

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Tanya Shannon, City Clerk