

Town of Long View

March 9, 2026

Meeting minutes

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Eddie Marlowe at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Mayor Marlowe conducted roll call. The following members were present:

- Alderman Genita Hill – Present
- Alderman Gary Lingerfelt – Present
- Alderman Allen Bumgarner – Present
- Alderman Tim Hertzelt – Present
- Alderman Phyllis Pennington – Present
- Mayor Eddie Marlowe – Present

Invocation

Alderman Allen Bumgarner delivered the invocation.

Approval of Minutes

February 9, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 9, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes.

A motion to approve the February 9, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes was made by Alderman Tim Hertzelt and seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Items for Discussion

Order to Vacate and Close (Hilltop)

Code Enforcement Officer Chad Powell addressed the Board regarding the proposed ordinances numbered CO-06-25-26 through CO-20-25-26, pertaining to dwelling units at the Hilltop Apartment Complex that had been found unfit for human habitation under the Town's minimum housing ordinance.

Mr. Powell provided extensive background on the situation, noting that the issues had come to light in late September following public outcry over large amounts of trash that had piled up over the apartment complex. The trash was addressed via summary abatement actions by the Town. During that same period, the Town began receiving an influx of minimum housing complaints from Hilltop residents and from individuals with family members living there in substandard conditions. He noted that at that time, the on-site management and maintenance personnel had recently quit, leaving the property completely unstaffed with no one for residents to turn to.

Mr. Powell explained that in response to word-of-mouth and third-party complaints, his office distributed business cards to residents and invited them to make contact so that minimum housing inspections could be scheduled in an organized, case-by-case manner. He noted that the severity of the complaints ranged widely — from minor issues such as peeling ceilings and flooring, to a soap-like substance periodically bubbling out of kitchen sinks, to one unit where a bathtub was reportedly about to fall through the floor.

By mid-October, a new on-site manager had been hired, and Mr. Powell's office met with that manager along with regional management and a regional maintenance manager who traveled from West Virginia. During that meeting, Mr. Powell's office requested permission to accompany the new manager, Tameeka DeLoach, during her initial unit inspections so that problems could be identified and addressed efficiently. That request was well received, and the first wave of inspections began on October 14, 2025. He noted that while the manager maintained regular communication and cooperation, no actual repairs or corrective actions were taken during that time.

Mr. Powell stated that during initial walkthroughs, numerous issues were discovered — with primary focus on vacant units, units with specific tenant complaints, and structural issues affecting entire buildings. He also noted that on many occasions the manager's own keys were unable to unlock doors within the complex, further complicating the ability to assess the full scope of the problems.

Mr. Powell described the Hilltop complex as comprising 12 buildings, with GIS mapping showing 107 total dwelling units — 90 within Long View's jurisdiction and 17 within the City of Hickory. He noted a discrepancy with the 172 building, which he believed to have only 8 units rather than 10 as shown in mapping, bringing the corrected total to approximately 105 apartments, with 88 in Long View's jurisdiction.

He then outlined the specific units and buildings affected by the first wave of ordinances being presented that evening, covering 28 total dwelling units across 8 separate buildings. He also noted that a second wave of violations, with deadlines set for June, would affect 13 additional units in 2 more buildings, including the entire 188 building due to structural issues.

Mr. Powell proceeded to detail the conditions found in each affected building and unit:

- 153 Building (153 18th Street Place NW): A structural issue affects all 10 dwelling units (153A through 153K, excluding 153I). Separate ordinances also address units 153C and 153D. Unit 153C was found vacant, unsecured, and appeared to have been broken into. Unit 153D was vacant and had no operable heating unit.
- 172 Building (172 19th Street NW): Houses 8 dwelling units (172A through 172H). The building had missing shingles and an uneven roofline revealed through drone flyover. A tenant had told Mr. Powell that the roof had leaked so badly into an upstairs unit that the tenant had been moved to a downstairs unit. Unit 172A was also covered by a separate ordinance, as it was found vacant, dirty, and full of inoperable junk appliances.
- 155 Building (155 18th Street Place NW): Four individual units were cited — 155A, 155J, 155K, and 155C. Unit 155A was listed as vacant by management but showed signs of possible unauthorized occupation; the unit was not entered due to personal safety concerns. Unit 155C had no operable heating unit, mold, and a significant roach infestation, along with cracks and sagging in the bathroom ceiling. Units 155J and 155K were described by Mr. Powell as having the worst conditions he had encountered at Hilltop. He stated that he would strongly recommend a hazmat suit and respirator for anyone entering those units. Upon opening the door to 155K, Mr. Powell described immediately smelling mold, his chest tightening, experiencing difficulty breathing, feeling physically ill, and later developing a headache and a nagging cough that persisted for several weeks after the visit. He stated that he did not believe the onset of those ailments to be a coincidence.

- 168 Building (168 19th Street NW): Unit 168B was cited. The occupants informed Mr. Powell that they had not had a functioning heating unit for three years and relied solely on portable space heaters for warmth.
- 171 Building (171 18th Street Place NW): Unit 171D was cited. The unit has an upstairs bathtub that is sinking into the floor and could potentially fall through to the kitchen below. The tenant stated she was afraid to take extended showers and was afraid for anyone to be in the kitchen downstairs whenever someone was using the bathtub.
- 180 Building (180 19th Street NW): Units 180B and 180D were cited, both vacant. Unit 180B was missing half the ceiling in the bathroom and showed signs of moisture and leaking above the toilet and shower. Unit 180D had a prior case history involving dirty water smelling of urine and feces that regularly poured out of the ceiling vent in the bathroom, falling directly onto the toilet, bathtub, and bathroom floor with such frequency that the prior tenants kept a five-gallon bucket in the bathroom to catch the falling water. Mr. Powell found that no repairs had been made, the previous tenant's belongings were still inside the unit, and he encountered a severe bug infestation upon entry that prevented him from even reaching the bathroom.
- 183 Building (183 18th Street Place NW): Unit 183D was cited. The unit is occupied, has no operable heating unit, and Mr. Powell witnessed a major roach infestation — including roaches emerging from the refrigerator, electrical outlets, and air conditioning vents. The tenant also reported severely deteriorated weather stripping around the front door, which she had addressed by taping the gap shut.
- 185 Building (185 18th Street Place NW): Unit 185E was found with an unsecured door and evidence of recent unauthorized occupation. The unit was unsanitary, full of trash and junk, had portions of ceiling falling down, what appeared to be mold under peeling material, an unknown brown substance on the floor throughout the unit, and a kitchen knife stabbed into a wall in the front room.

Mr. Powell also addressed a sewage issue that had been active since early December. He described two locations where sewage had been flowing out of the ground near the complex. Public Works personnel had jetted the sewer line in January to provide temporary relief, but the problem had returned within days. As of the last week of February, the flow from the first location appeared to have slowed or stopped, though Mr. Powell stated he did not believe it had corrected itself. The second location was still actively flowing as recently as the prior week, with the sewage running downhill toward a storm drain and a creek along Second Avenue NW. He noted that a child's sled was visible in the sewage flow area, indicating that children had been sledding in that area during the snow. He also noted the presence of ongoing trash and water line issues on the property, stating that the property had remained in a near-perpetual state of ordinance violation throughout the past several months.

Mr. Powell reported that the most recent on-site manager had also resigned, leaving the complex again without management as of the prior week. He noted that during a follow-up meeting with that manager before her resignation, she had informed him that no repairs had been completed on the Long View side of the property and that the entire repair budget had been exhausted by a single HVAC unit replacement on the Hickory side of the property.

Mr. Powell then noted what he described as a possible sign of progress: a property manager had been sent from Ohio the prior week to assess conditions, and he had met with her the previous Friday. She indicated that ownership planned to immediately begin addressing issues, starting with currently occupied units. Mr. Powell noted that he had seen a maintenance truck on the property that very day, which he described as a positive sign. He also reported being invited to a virtual meeting with upper management during which several individuals unsuccessfully lobbied to have that evening's proceedings delayed. Despite this potential progress, Mr. Powell stated his belief that the adoption of the proposed ordinances without further delay was necessary and warranted given that many months had passed with none of the issues being addressed, and given the ongoing health and safety concerns for the residents.

He explained that upon adoption of the ordinances, he would post placards on the affected units beginning the following day, identifying them as vacated and closed by ordinance. He noted that occupation of a building so posted constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor under North Carolina General Statute 160D-1203, subsection 4. The ordinances include a two-week grace period (March 23, 2026) for remaining occupants to gather their belongings, after which all occupants must vacate to avoid possible criminal charges or eviction proceedings. He further stated that after the grace period, the Town planned to take steps to secure vacant units and ultimately board up doors and accessible ground-level openings. The costs associated with boarding up the property would constitute a lien against the property collectible as a special assessment under NCGS 160D-1203, subsection 7.

He also noted the involvement of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Homelessness Response Team, whose manager, Amber Bradford, was present at the meeting to assist any Hilltop residents in attendance, in addition, WPCOG would be holding a Hilltop Resource night on Wednesday, March 11, 2026 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. for any Hilltop resident wishing to gather resources.

Board Discussion:

Alderman Genita Hill expressed deep concern about the conditions at the complex, noting that what had been shown on screen was deeply troubling — that these residents had been going home to those conditions every day while paying rent. She stated that the management company owed every resident of Hilltop Apartments an apology and that rent should be returned, adding that the conditions were not even feasible for animals to live in, let alone human beings. She emphasized that this was "uncalled for" and that no one should have paid rent to live in such conditions.

Alderman Allen Bumgarner questioned where funding would come from to address all the remaining issues, given that the entire repair budget had reportedly been spent on a single HVAC unit. He expressed that the situation had long been a mark against the Town and that he could not understand how a business could be run in such a manner. He stated that the property owners had been taking rent money from residents while allowing them to live in those conditions, and that he could not see giving the ownership any more time. He noted that ownership had not responded to letters or returned phone calls, and affirmed that the Town had done everything within its power but that its hands were tied as it was private property.

Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt stated that due to the extreme neglect and negligence of Millenia Housing Management, the Board was left with no option other than to vacate and close the affected apartments for the safety and betterment of the residents.

Alderman Genita Hill reiterated her agreement and noted that she had researched the company online and found that they had previously had an apartment that burned and exploded due to neglect, that they were still actively taking rental inquiries online despite the known conditions, and that the CEO of the company had had his home raided and investigated. She expressed concern that if residents were still paying rent, it was unclear where that money was going. She stated that the company appeared to operate purely for profit without regard for the health and welfare of its tenants, and that she was especially disturbed by the fact that children were living in and playing near these conditions, potentially suffering health effects that parents might not be able to trace back to the apartment conditions.

Town Manager James Cozart noted that the Board was required by law to take this action and that they had no choice in the matter given the circumstances.

Mr. Powell added that what might seem like minor issues, such as rotted fascia, could quickly escalate into dangerous situations — for example, if wiring had been compromised and a fire started, the structural issues would make that far worse than if the problem had been addressed earlier.

Mayor Eddie Marlowe offered formal remarks for the record, stating that he had worked with Hilltop Apartments and the Long View community for more than 25 years — both during his law enforcement career and in his capacity as Mayor — and that the property had long held a place

of importance in the community, with its challenges affecting not just the complex but the broader community as a whole. He outlined his deep concern regarding the manner in which residents had been treated and the ongoing neglect demonstrated by Millenia Properties, citing the following specific failures: accumulation of trash, repeated Town staff intervention to prevent water shutoffs due to delinquent payments, persistent sewer and water leaks left unaddressed, noticeable deterioration of buildings and individual units due to lack of maintenance, and insufficient communication between Millenia Properties and the Town of Long View and its residents. He stated it was deeply troubling that taxpayer resources had been required simply to ensure the health and safety of residents left vulnerable by the property owner's inaction. He noted that Millenia's negligence had reflected poorly on their organization, placed unnecessary burdens on residents, created complications for public services, increased workload on Town personnel, added pressure to the WPCOG emergency response team, exposed code enforcement officers to health hazards, and resulted in negative media attention for the community. He stated there was no justification for such neglect, and that at the most fundamental level, Millenia Properties had failed to fulfill the simplest obligation of any property owner: to properly maintain its property and ensure residents live in a safe home.

Mayor Marlowe also expressed his personal sorrow to the residents present, acknowledging the hardship of paying money to have a place to call home and being met with such conditions. He encouraged all residents to follow up with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments' housing representative, Amber Bradford, who was present and available for assistance.

WPCOG Homelessness Response Team Statement:

Amber Bradford, Homelessness Response Manager with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, addressed those present. She acknowledged there was no emergency housing readily available and that this was not a quick fix. She described the resources that would be available through an upcoming information session scheduled for Wednesday, March 11th, including guidance on legal options, housing opportunities, and voucher programs. She noted that her team would also be at the Hilltop property the following day to distribute information and ensure no residents were missed.

Hilltop Resident Comment:

A Hilltop resident (Joyce Turgeon) addressed the Board to share concerns about being offered a transfer to another unit within the complex and feeling uncomfortable with that option, fearing it would place her in a similarly problematic situation. She also noted that management had attempted to have her renew her lease in January despite the known conditions affecting the 172 building, claiming the renewal was for HUD purposes. She raised concerns that HUD funding was still being collected on the property despite the conditions.

Mayor Marlowe directed the resident to speak with Ms. Bradford to address those concerns and get connected with the appropriate resources.

Statement from Millenia Housing Regional Representatives:

Crystal Ramey, identified as the District/Regional Manager from the West Virginia office, along with her husband, the Regional Maintenance Supervisor, came forward to address the Board after being invited to do so by Mayor Marlowe, who acknowledged that he had not been aware of their presence earlier. Ms. Ramey began by apologizing to the residents and the Board for the conditions at the property, stating that she was in the business to give people homes and not to allow conditions like those that had been shown. She noted that she had been trying for months to get funding and resources directed to Hilltop and could provide numerous emails to demonstrate those efforts, but had not gotten anywhere with upper management.

Ms. Ramey outlined the immediate action plan her team was beginning the following day, including: securing all vacant units, placing placards on affected doors, working on the soffit repairs to the 153 and 188 buildings with a lift truck arriving the next day (with an estimated completion by end of week), beginning the process to fully improve the 172 building (acknowledged to be a longer-term project), deploying an HVAC contractor to address all units without operable heating, and engaging a plumber to address the sewer and water leaks.

(pending utility marking by 811 before any digging could begin). She also noted that pest control had been on site that day and that a roofer would be brought in to assess the 172 building.

Ms. Ramey acknowledged the frustration of being in the "eleventh hour" and expressed personal distress at the situation, noting she had previously experienced homelessness herself and understood how it felt. She stated that she disagreed with how the property had been managed and that she and her team had not had the resources or support from upper management to address the issues sooner.

Ms. Ramey also noted that she was aware of unauthorized individuals and potential squatters on the property and asked whether police could accompany her team during the securing process the following morning for safety reasons.

Joe, the contractor who had been engaged by Ms. Ramey's team and had begun work that day, also addressed the Board. He outlined his priorities: getting the HVAC contractor on site the next morning with a full list of units needing service, having pest control look at all units and crawl spaces, arranging a roofer's estimate for the 172 building, beginning the soffit repairs with the arriving lift, and already having started repair work in units 171B and 171D with ceiling repairs and full bathtub and surround replacement. He described his team's plan to identify habitable units that could be quickly prepared to allow displaced residents to be transferred from the worst-affected units so that those units could then be shut down and properly repaired.

The contractor noted that his goal was to prioritize occupied units and then work through the violation list systematically, addressing minor violations quickly and relocating residents where necessary to address higher-priority violations. He estimated that approximately three units could be made ready for transfers before his team departed that week.

Board questions and discussion with Millenia representatives:

Alderman Phyllis Pennington asked whether it was the plan to find placement for all 28 affected households within the 14-day grace period. Ms. Ramey acknowledged that realistically, placing 28 families in that time frame was not possible, and that many of those units were already vacant. She noted that some currently occupied residents in the 180 building might be able to be relocated within the complex depending on the condition of those units. (Note that it was believed to only be 6 occupied units affected during this first wave of orders.)

Alderman Allen Bumgarner expressed skepticism about where money would actually come from, given the stated claim that the budget had been spent on one HVAC unit. Ms. Ramey and the contractor acknowledged they had some funding but were uncertain how far it would go and were working to try secure more from Millenia ownership.

Alderman Genita Hill raised the question of whether residents who had stopped paying rent due to the conditions would have received eviction notices. Ms. Ramey confirmed that there were multiple families who had not paid rent and that no eviction notices had been issued. Mr. Powell agreed that he did not blame the residents for not paying rent given the conditions.

Town Clerk Minor acknowledged that Ms. Ramey and her team were not the ones responsible for the failures and that the frustration and accountability should be directed toward upper management in Ohio. She noted the absence of the decision-making leadership from the property ownership.

Mayor Marlowe emphasized that above all else, the primary need was communication — that had Ohio's leadership communicated with the Town proactively, many of these issues could have been addressed more collaboratively and the residents could have been given some hope. He asked that Ms. Ramey convey to upper management that the Town required ongoing communication, whether through her office or directly, and that the phone needed to be answered when the Town called.

Town Manager James Cozart expressed concern about whether the funding would be sufficient to complete all necessary repairs, noting that it would not be inexpensive, and expressed

sympathy for the position Ms. Ramey and her team were in given that the responsibility had been placed on them by upper management.

A motion was called to adopt the ordinances.

Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt made a motion to adopt Ordinance Number(s) CO 06-25-26 thru CO 20-25-26. The motion was seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Marlowe advised all remaining residents present to not wait until the last day of the grace period but to follow through immediately with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments' housing team for assistance.

Planning Board Appointment

Town Planner Susan Matheson presented the recommendation of the Town of Long View Planning Board that the Board of Aldermen appoint applicant Leslie Freeman to serve as a member of the Planning Board. The recommendation was made at the Planning Board's February 19, 2026 meeting.

A motion to appoint Leslie Freeman to serve on the Town of Long View Planning Board was made by Alderman Allen Bumgarner and seconded by Alderman Phyllis Pennington.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing for Zoning

Mayor Marlow explained that the purpose of the public hearing was to receive public comment and consider assigning a zoning district classification consistent with the Town's zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan for a recently annexed property located at 3569 15th Avenue SW.

Alderman Tim Hertzfel made a motion to open the public hearing and seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt.

All were in favor. Motion carried. The public hearing was declared open at 6:40 p.m.

Public Hearing Comment:

A member of the public identifying herself as Susan Foreman, residing at 1456 33rd Street (located on the corner of 15th Avenue), came forward to ask about the nature of any planned development and whether road changes were anticipated. She referenced word-of-mouth information she had received suggesting that something was going to be done with the property. Town staff clarified that part of the land was in the city and part was in the county, and that the owner was seeking to bring the full strip under city jurisdiction.

Town Planner Susan Matheson provided clarification on the zoning amendment, explaining that this was Zoning Map Amendment 01-26 and involved assigning an initial zoning designation to a recently voluntarily annexed property — not a rezoning. She noted the property had held a residential zoning designation in its prior jurisdiction and the proposed zoning was R-3 (minimum density residential), consistent with the surrounding parcels within the Town of Long View's city limits. The Planning Board had reviewed and approved the R-3 designation as its recommendation.

A second member of the public, identifying herself as residing at 1448 33rd Street, came forward to ask whether R-3 zoning meant multiple housing. Ms. Matheson clarified that R-3 is a minimum density district and is the same designation applied to all surrounding parcels in that area.

Seeing no further speakers, a motion was made to close the public hearing.

A motion to close the public hearing and return the matter to the Board for discussion and action was made by Alderman Allen Bumgarner and seconded by Alderman Tim Hertzell.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously. The public hearing was declared closed at 6:47 p.m.

Approval of Consistency & Reasonableness Statement

Town Planner Susan Matheson presented the consistency and reasonableness statement associated with Zoning Map Amendment 01-26, pursuant to General Statute 160D-387. She explained that the Town of Long View Planning Board reviewed and considered the zoning map amendment for the recently voluntarily annexed property at 3569 15th Avenue SW, that proper notice had been given to adjacent property owners, that the proposed R-3 zoning designation was consistent with surrounding properties and in line with the Town's adopted development regulations and comprehensive plan, and that the Planning Board had approved the recommendation. She noted that the Board of Aldermen would also need to approve the consistency and reasonableness statement.

A motion to approve the Consistency and Reasonableness Statement for Zoning Map Amendment 01-26 was made by Alderman Genita Hill and seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Ordinance No. CO-21-25-26

Town Planner Susan Matheson presented Ordinance No. CO-21-25-26, being the ordinance to amend the Zoning Map of the Town of Long View in association with Zoning Map Amendment 01-26, formally assigning the R-3 zoning designation to the property at 3569 15th Avenue SW.

A motion to adopt Ordinance No. CO-21-25-26 was made by Alderman Tim Hertzell and seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Resolution regarding Even-Year Elections

Town Manager James Cozart presented a resolution for the Board's consideration in support of moving Long View municipal elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years. He explained that the purpose of the resolution was to demonstrate the Board's support for aligning municipal elections with county, state, and federal elections. He noted that the resolution had unanimous support from municipalities across Catawba and Burke Counties and that consolidating elections would have a positive effect on voter turnout. He further noted that the change would also result in cost savings for both the county and municipalities by eliminating standalone special elections during odd-numbered years. He explained that if approved by the General Assembly in Raleigh, the change would result in an amendment to the Town's charter, and that this resolution — if adopted — would be forwarded to the Town's state representatives for presentation at the General Assembly. He clarified that if the resolution passed at the state level, it would then return to the Town for an official vote.

Motion to approve the Resolution regarding Even-Year Elections was made by Alderman Tim Hertzell and seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of RDEDG Agreement

Town Manager James Cozart presented a letter of award received from the North Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division (RDEDG) grant program. He explained that the grant had been applied for to fund sidewalk construction and maintenance along First Avenue SW from the Hickory-Long View border to 33rd Street SW at the corner in front of Sheer Faith Hair Design. The award amount was \$850,000, requiring a 5% Town match

totaling \$42,500, which would be addressed through a budget amendment at a later date. He recommended the Board vote to accept the grant.

A motion to approve the RDEDG Grant Agreement was made by Alderman Genita Hill and seconded by Alderman Phyllis Pennington.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Call for Special Meeting for the Budget Retreat

Town Clerk Heather Minor read the formal notice into the record, citing North Carolina General Statute 160A-71, Section 3, which provides that during any regular meeting, the council may call or schedule a special meeting, provided that the scheduling of such meeting specifies the time, place, and purpose. Town Clerk Minor stated that the Board of Aldermen was requested to schedule a special meeting for the 2026–2027 fiscal year budget retreat, during which each department would present their budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year and the Board would discuss tax rates, rates of service, cost adjustments, fee schedules, and any other budgetary items deemed necessary by the Finance Director or Town Manager. The proposed date was Monday, March 30, 2026, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and typically ending around 4:00 p.m., to be held at the Long View Recreation Center, 3107 2nd Avenue NW.

A motion to call a Special Meeting for the Budget Retreat on Monday, March 30, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at the Long View Recreation Center was made by Alderman Allen Bumgarner and seconded by Alderman Tim Hertz.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Lion's Club Gift Basket Request Approval

Suzanne Byrd, representing the Long View Lions Club, addressed the Board regarding the club's upcoming 16th Annual Chili Cook-Off fundraiser. She explained that from time to time, local businesses and state-licensed wineries donate wine for gift baskets that are assembled for the event. She noted that these donations are always presented in gift baskets in unopened form and would not be opened at the Long View Recreation Center. She stated that the Lions Club determined it would be prudent to formally request permission to have those gift baskets containing unopened alcoholic products on the Recreation Center property.

A motion to approve the Lion's Club Gift Basket Request was made by Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt and seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

PART-F Grant Update

Town Manager James Cozart provided the Board with a status update on the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PART-F) grant application. He reported that the steering committee had met and reviewed a preliminary draft of the Recreation Center plan, which had been formulated as part of the grant application process. The draft incorporated community survey results compiled over the past year.

He described next steps as including open-house-style community meetings where residents could drop in, view the plan, and provide comments, with the sessions to be held in the Council Chambers and advertised publicly.

Town Manager Cozart outlined items in the preliminary plan under consideration, including additional playground equipment, pickleball courts, a soccer field, a football field, a tee ball field, and other new amenities for the Recreation Center property.

He noted one area of concern: preliminary estimates indicated that parking at the Recreation Center could be an issue if all the proposed amenities were developed, as weekends would become the peak-use time. He suggested that in line with the goal of transforming the facility into a true community recreation center, the Board may need to revisit the practice of renting out the

building, as weekend rentals could conflict with parking and access for community members using the new amenities. He proposed that the building could instead be reserved for Town-sponsored events during off-peak hours.

Mayor Marlowe raised a question about the potential inclusion of a dog park as one of the amenities, noting that if that were included, the Town's ordinance governing pets would need to be modified accordingly. Town Manager Cozart stated that if the dog park was agreed upon to include in the Recreation Plan, we would revise our ordinance.

Alderman Genita Hill expressed support for the direction Town Manager Cozart had outlined.

A motion was made to discontinue renting out the Recreation Center building.

A motion to stop renting the Recreation Center was made by Alderman Tim Hertzel and seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Acceptance of 2026 Audit Contract

Finance Director Melissa Lalonde presented the 2026 audit contract from Lowdermilk, Church & Co. She noted that budget season was approaching and that the audit contract for the next fiscal year had been submitted by the firm. She stated that the Town had a positive working relationship with the auditors, that they were thorough, and that there had never been any problems with the relationship in the past. She requested that the Board vote to approve the contract so that it could be returned to the firm and the engagement could proceed.

A motion to approve the 2026 Audit Contract with Lowdermilk, Church & Co. was made by Alderman Allen Bumgarner and seconded by Alderman Tim Hertzel.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance Report

Finance Director Melissa Lalonde presented the Finance Report as of February 28, 2026. She reported the following:

General Fund:

- The Town was 66% into the current budget year.
- Year-to-date revenues: \$5,845,371
- Year-to-date expenditures: \$5,191,467
- Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$653,903
- 92% of ad valorem taxes had been collected
- 96% of projected investment income had been collected

Utility Fund:

- Year-to-date revenues: \$2,011,441
- Year-to-date expenditures: \$2,014,504
- Expenditures exceeded revenues by \$3,063
- The Town was awaiting \$20,100 in grant revenue for the water map and sewer grant to be mailed back
- 2,271 bills were issued in February, totaling \$258,344
- 24 new service applications were received in February

Public Comment

No members of the public came forward during the designated public comment period. One person had signed up for public comment but left the meeting prior.

Closing Remarks

Mayor Marlowe invited closing remarks from the Board and staff. Alderman Genita Hill, Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt, Alderman Allen Bumgarner, Alderman Tim Hertz, and Alderman Phyllis Pennington each indicated they had no additional remarks.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Allen Bumgarner and seconded by Alderman Tim Hertz.

All were in favor. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Staff in Attendance: Town Manager James Cozart, Finance Director Melissa Lalonde, HR Director Sidney Shirley, Deputy Finance Director Denise Collins, Police Chief Justin Reid, Police Major Dennis Hardin, Fire Chief James Brinkley, Deputy Fire Chief Tyler Keener, Fire Captain Alex Smith, Public Works Josh White, Police Lieutenant Jason Goudelock, Police Sgt. Alex Chapman, MPO May Xiong, Officer Chase Bentley, Officer Rafael Flores-Lopez, Town Clerk Heather Minor.

Media in Attendance: Sarah Johnson with Hickory Daily Record, David Cedrone with WHKY.

Others in Attendance: Steve McVay, Elisha Shuford, Michelle Bumgarner, Hiedi Lee, Karen Stringer, Kailyn Sherow, Bill Carson, Brittany Mayfield, DeDrick Gaines, Greg Henritze, Marla Thompson, Crystal Ramey, Les Ramey, George Folmsbee, Donna Webster, Will Porterfield Johnson, Millie Drum, Amber Bradford, Angelica Epley, Joyce Turgeon, Mitzi Gellman, April Rhinehardt, Darrin Fuddrell, LaDosca Jean Washington, Jamiah Gaither