

**City Council Regular Session  
November 10, 2025**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in Regular Session on Monday, November 10, 2025 in Council Chambers, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Kirk Rivers  
Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence  
Councilman Johnson Biggs  
Councilman Joseph Peel  
Councilman Jarvis Gibbs  
Councilwoman Rose (Whitehurst) Cartwright  
Councilwoman Katherine Felton  
Councilman Ronnie Morris  
Councilman Johnnie Walton

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Reginald Goodson  
City Attorney Bill Morgan  
Chief of Staff Monica Cole  
Chief of Police Eddie Graham  
Public Utilities Director Dwan Bell  
Public Utilities Assistant Director Raymond Staten  
Fire Chief Chris Carver  
HR Director Aresta Johnson  
Interim Finance Director Brian Lewis  
Development Services Director Carl Best  
Planner II Dylan Lloyd  
Parks and Recreation Director Stacy Williams  
Grants Administrator Jon Hawley  
IT Director Matthew Simpson  
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant  
IT Systems Analyst Pedro Holley II  
City Clerk April Onley

Mayor Rivers called the City Council's Regular Session to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilman Gibbs provided the invocation, after which Councilwoman Cartwright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:**

Mayor Rivers directed the Council's attention to the prepared agenda. He noted that there was a staff request to add *Consideration – Updated Grant Project Ordinance for Ray Street Water and Sewer Replacement Project* to the Consent Agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Spence asked that *Consideration – Charlie Kirk Mural* be included on the Regular Agenda. Councilman Walton requested *Discussion – Purchasing Cards* be added to the Regular Agenda. Manager Goodson stated that Chief Graham would be giving the Council a brief presentation / introduction as well.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton to approve the agenda as amended. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Gibbs, Cartwright, Spence, Felton, Morris and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**2. Mayoral Recognition:**

**a. Ronald G. Penny;**

Mayor Rivers recognized Mr. Penny, who served as an attorney and former ECSU employee before being tapped by the governor to move to Raleigh where he eventually became the Secretary of Revenue. He was someone who always believed in Elizabeth City and felt that we were on a good financial path, and he wanted to take a moment to show that we appreciated everything he did for us. On behalf of the City Council, Mayor Rivers presented Mr. Penny with

a plaque of appreciation. Mr. Penny said it was an honor to accept plaque and the recognition. He came to Elizabeth City in 1979 when the city was on the move but had its challenges. When he was appointed to state service, he made sure that Pasquotank County went beside his name because he wanted this area to be acknowledged. Elizabeth City and the people here would always be amongst the things for which he was thankful. When he sat on the Local Government Commission and Elizabeth City came up, he was reminded that he did not want to hear about statistics and there was never a moment that he doubted the resolve of the Council to do the right thing for the people of Elizabeth City. He thanked all of them for what they did for the people and for working hard to make the city what it had become. There is no perfect city, but they are clearly striving to make this a better place and it was with great pride that he accepted this honor and thanked them for recognizing him tonight.

### **3. Comments from the Public:**

Mayor Rivers asked if there were individuals signed up for public comment. Upon the Clerk's reply that there were several speakers, Mayor Rivers opened the comment period and requested that they be called forward.

**Robert Deyo – 109 Country Club Drive, Elizabeth City** – Mr. Deyo thanked the Council for tabling The Pines rezoning matter previously. At the last hearing, he felt that it was confirmed that the rezoning would lock many things in place. The wetlands delineation survey had yet to be submitted. In the TRC meeting, the fire marshal pointed out a problem with access, which had not been addressed. There have been claims that these actions will save the golf course, but he was not sure about that. This property still has more than \$100,000 in unpaid taxes. He heard that those taxes would be paid once finances are secured, but that is financially unstable. The Planning Commission voted 5:1 to deny the rezoning and he felt that the Council should uphold that recommendation.

**Rachel Surface – 1614 Crescent Drive, Elizabeth City** – The golf course is important to the Elizabeth City community. She pointed out that Councilman Walton's comments during the previous meetings struck her about there being a time when not everyone was welcome on the course. People use the golf course to connect with one another. Everyone should be welcome. As we are a growing city and more people are coming and asking what we have to do, it becomes more important for tourism. With the rezoning, two of the holes on the golf course would be removed, reducing it to a 16-hole course. It is clear that this would be the beginning of the end for the course at a time when we should be growing and expanding instead of shrinking. This is a space where people can come together. The economic benefit of the course should be embraced instead of sending people to other counties. She could not help but think about Greenville and the way it served as a hub with the Michael Jordan tournament that people flocked to each year. If they allowed building on the course, they would lose it.

**Jeff Terry– 1105 Riverside Avenue, Elizabeth City** – Mr. Terry thanked the Council for conducting the press conference regarding the investigative report issued by the State Auditor. Elizabeth City needs a strong Finance Director. He understood the City updated their P-Card policy and restricted usage by nearly half, which was good, but the Finance Department still needs a strong leader to sustain improvements. The Finance Director must have a clear line of sight to processes and he would encourage the Council to review p-cards monthly and to move forward more aggressively on getting a new Finance Director in place quickly. He understood the City Manager was accountable for all employees but it was still imperative to have this position in place for the good of the organization.

**Vincent Savino – 1539 Clubhouse, Elizabeth City** – Mr. Savino said he saw three parts to the rezoning: the risk, the reward and the facts. If it is not approved, the course could be sold and lost. There could be homes constructed on it, which he did not really have a problem with that. Does the rezoning really save the golf course? They have not really heard many concrete plans about what is going to happen. The owner and developer have not ruled out not doing additional building. Removing the putting greens and two holes does not say they're trying to save the course. What's the reward? If it gets approved, residents get to play golf and people make money. This is the fourth meeting we've had and the plans keep changing. The owner has not paid their taxes and yet we are rewarding them. Why haven't we foreclosed? Why are we letting someone who has never done a development like this do this? There are vacancies in Emerald Lakes, Weatherly Lofts, everywhere, so we don't need the homes. There is no demand. The Planning Commission denied it. This rezoning goes against the established guidelines. We talk about Arbor Day and the need for open spaces, but now we want to build on an existing open space. This should be denied.

**Jodi Barsness – 109 Country Club Drive, Elizabeth City –** Ms. Barsness advised that she worked in real estate and development and was not in favor of the rezoning. The Planning Commission voted against the rezoning and the staff report is against the rezoning. Sam Davis says this will save the course, but she does not see how that’s likely. No one will pay to play golf surrounded by construction. This is the third version of the plan. If they truly meant to develop it themselves, they could have done it under the R-15 zoning. She believed they meant to flip it and sell it. She felt it was a conflict of interest by Sam Davis to lobby his office to another government. This proposal has drawn attention from various media sources. This does not affect just 11 acres; it opens the door for the entire area. She asked that the Council deny the rezoning.

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

**a. Consideration – Approve October 27, 2025 Regular Session Minutes;**

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Rose Cartwright to approve the minutes with any necessary corrections. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Gibbs, Cartwright, Spence, Felton, Morris and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**5. Consent Agenda:**

Mayor Rivers read the Consent Agenda item into the record, as follows:

**a. Consideration – Approve Budget Amendment for Closing Fee (Lead Service Line Inventory Phase II) and Revised Project Ordinance;**

**GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE # 2025-11-01(AMENDED)  
The Lead Detection & Removal Plan, Phases I and II  
Grant No. AIA-D-ARP-0233, SRF-D-LSL-0023**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following grant project ordinance is hereby adopted:

**I.** The project authorized is the Lead Detection and Removal Plan, Phases I and II. Phase I was adopted by ordinance on April 8, 2024, and this document hereby amends that ordinance to include Phase II as provided herein.

**II.** The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the project within the terms of the project documents and the budget contained herein.

**III.** The following revenues are anticipated to be available to complete this project:

[31-3490-8285]	NCDEQ – AIA Grant (LSL Phase I)	\$100,000
[68-3490-8100]	NCDEQ – Drinking Water SRF (LSL Phase II)	\$1,000,000
[68-3970-0000]	Transfer From Water & Sewer Fund	\$20,000

TOTAL REVENUES: \$1,120,000

**IV.** A sum of \$100,000 was originally approved for project expenses, to paid from the account below. The total appropriation for project expenses is hereby amended as follows:

[31-8280-0402]	Lead Service Line Inventorying (LSL Phase I)	\$100,000
[68-8100-0400]	Lead Service Line Inventorying (LSL Phase II)	\$1,020,000

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,120,000



		<b>Total</b>	\$ - \$ -

Total Change to Revenues \$ -

ADOPTED, this 10th day of November 2025

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
E. Kirk Rivers,  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
April Onley, NCCMC City  
Clerk

**b. Consideration – Adopt Street Closing Ordinance for Holiday Parade;**

**ORDINANCE #2025-11-02  
AN ORDINANCE DECLARING A ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY  
PARADE**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of Elizabeth City acknowledges a long tradition of providing an annual Christmas Holiday parade for the pleasure of its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of Elizabeth City acknowledges its citizens realize a financial and public safety benefit from holding the annual Christmas Holiday Parade event; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of Elizabeth City acknowledges the parade event requires approximately three hours to install signing and traffic control, structures and equipment, and also requires approximately two (2) hours for removing same, and litter;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED**, by the City Council of Elizabeth City pursuant to the authority granted by G.S. 20-169 that they do hereby declare a temporary road closure during the day(s) and times set forth below on the following described portion of a State Highway System route:

- Date:** Saturday, December 6, 2025
- Time Duration:** 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.
- Route Description:** Begin on Westover, Right on Ehringhaus Street, Left onto Road Street, Right onto Main Street, Right onto Water Street and passed Waterfront Park
- Closure Time(s):** Beginning at 1:00 p.m., the following will close:
  - Corsair Circle from Hull Drive to Ehringhaus Street
  - Catalina Avenue from Corsair Circle to Brooks Avenue
  - Albemarle Street from Westover Street to Brooks Avenue
  - Westover Street from Ehringhaus Street to Catalina Avenue.

- Beginning at 4:00 p.m., the following will close
  - Ehringhaus Street from Selden Street to Water Street
  - Road Street from Speed Street to Main Street
  - Main Street from Road Street to Water Street
  - Water Street from Elizabeth Street to Riverside Avenue / Shepard Street

This will serve as the planned route for the parade.

This ordinance to become effective when signs are erected giving notice of the limits and times of the event, and implementation of adequate traffic control to guide through vehicles around

the event site.

**SECTION I. EFFECTIVE DATE:** This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

**SECTION II. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE.** If any section, or part of provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then it is expressly provided and it is the intention of the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City in passing this Ordinance that its parts shall be severable and all other parts of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby and they shall remain in full force and effect.

**READ, CONSIDERED, AND ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, during which a quorum was present, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

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E. Kirk Rivers,  
Mayor

*Attest:*

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April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**c. Consideration – Adopt Resolution Assuming Ownership and Maintenance of Hunter’s Lake Streets;**

**RESOLUTION #2025-11-01  
ACCEPTING NUGGET TRAIL AND COMPASS DRIVE  
INTO CITY OF ELIZABETH CITY PUBLIC STREET SYSTEM**

**WHEREAS**, the developer has requested that the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City accept the following roads into the City’s Public Street System:

- a. Nugget Trail, beginning on the southeast side of Compass Drive looping northerly and westerly for a distance of approximately 4580 feet back Compass Drive; and
- b. Compass Drive from Savin Road in a southerly direction approximately 2100 feet within the completed Hunter’s Lake Phase II subdivision.

**WHEREAS**, City staff has determined that the streets were constructed to City standards and in accordance with subdivision and site plan approvals; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City is of the opinion that the above described streets should be added to the City of Elizabeth City Public Street System.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City that the above-described streets are hereby accepted into the City’s Public Street System for ownership and maintenance and further directs that this change be effected in the City’s Powell Bill formula for funding, as appropriate.

**ADOPTED**, this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.

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E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

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April D. Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**d. Consideration – Approve Budget Amendment for Generator;**

AMENDMENT TO FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE CITY OF ELIZABETH CITY			
<b>BE IT ORDAINED</b>	by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina:		
<b>SECTION I.</b>	To amend the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2026, the appropriations are to be changed as follows:		
	<b>Account #</b>	<b>Department / Account Title</b>	<b>Decrease</b>
	30-8400-1601	Maintenance and Repair of Generator	\$45,312.79
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 45,312.79</b>
			<b>\$ -</b>
	Total Change in Expenses		\$ (45,312.79)
<b>Section II.</b>	To amend Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Ordinance, the anticipated revenues are to		
	<b>Account #</b>	<b>Department/Account Title</b>	<b>Decrease</b>
	30-3350-8300	Insurance Settlement Check	\$45,312.79
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
			<b>\$ 45,312.79</b>
	Total Change to Revenues		\$ 45,312.79
ADOPTED, this 10th day of November 2025			
		E. Kirk Rivers,	
Attest:		Mayor	
	_____ April Onley, NCCMC City Clerk		

**e. Consideration – Approve Budget Amendment and Amended Ordinance for Asset Management Plan Update Grants;**

**GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE #2025-11-03  
Asset Management Plan Update  
Grant Nos. AIA-D-0321, AIA-W-0317**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following grant project ordinance is hereby adopted:

**I.** The project authorized is the Asset Management Plan Update, and the project’s estimated duration is 16 months.



- f. **Consideration – Call for a Public Hearing – RZ 04-25 -;**
- g. **Consideration – Updated Grant Project Ordinance for Ray Street Water and Sewer Replacement Project (As Added During Agenda Adjustments);**

**ORDINANCE #2025-11-04  
RAY STREET WATER AND SEWER REPLACEMENT  
AMENDED GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE**

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following grant project ordinance is hereby adopted:

**Section 1.** The project authorized is the Ray Street Water and Sewer Replacement Project, consisting of sub-projects Part A and Part B, to be financed with grant funds,

**Section 2.** The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the grant project within the terms of the grant documents and the budget contained herein,

**Section 3.** The following revenues are anticipated to be available to complete this project:

<u>Ray Street, Part A</u> [31-3490-8286]	CDBG-I Award 19-I-3648	\$333,417.37
<u>Ray Street, Part B</u> [31-3490-8287]	CDBG-I Award 21-I-4004	\$713,132.79
<u>Total Revenues:</u>		\$1,046,550.16

**Section 4.** The following amounts are appropriated for the project:

<u>Ray Street, Part A</u> [31-8280-7311]	CDBG-I Award 19-I-3648	\$333,417.37
<u>Ray Street, Part B</u> [31-8280-7312]	CDBG-I Award 21-I-4004	\$713,132.79
<u>Total Expenses:</u>		\$1,046,550.16

**Section 5.** Copies of this grant project ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer and Finance Director for direction in carrying out this project.

**ADOPTED** this, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
E. Kirk Rivers,  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
April D. Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

Mayor Rivers asked the Council's pleasure on the Consent Agenda.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton to approve the Consent Agenda. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Gibbs, Cartwright, Spence, Felton, Morris and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

## **6. Regular Agenda:**

### **a. Any Item Removed from the Consent Agenda;**

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

### **b. Update / Discussion – Capital Improvement Projects;**

Manager Goodson reminded the Council that Councilman Peel requested that an update be provided on this item. Staff met with Attorneys Mize and Cheatwood, both of whom are present via Zoom if needed. Staff provided a handout from Attorney Cheatwood that gives a timeline for the coming funding cycle. We plan to go before the LGC in April; therefore, we will need to bid the electric substation, wells and fire station (and any other projects) by the first of the year. The LGC requires that we have firm bids to authorize any funding, and not just estimates.

Mayor Rivers said it sounded like we just needed to make sure we have bids in place by January. Councilman Peel asked if this would be just for those three projects. Manager Goodson replied that the three he just mentioned were the top three: the electric substation, the wells and the fire station. We are looking at \$30 million just for those three. We looked at some of the Year 2 and Year 3 needs to see if we could group those in since most of the other Year 1 needs were able to be paid with the General Fund. We need to determine how much we want to tackle at once. We can add more in if needed, such as generators for Load Management and so on. There are more items but that would be up to the Council to decide how deep to go.

Councilman Biggs verified the plan was to start getting firm bids in January. Manager Goodson confirmed that was correct. Councilman Biggs asked what stood in the way of getting bids now instead of waiting until January. Manager Goodson explained that when the contractors bid, the prices are only good for so long, usually about 90 days. Councilman Biggs pointed out that we needed to have plans in order to accept bids. Do we have all those documents so when we get to the January date we are in line so we can truthfully get these in? Manager Goodson advised that our consultants are working on the plans right now for the substation and the wells; however, the fire station is another story, though it is still in the works.

Attorney Cheatwood reminded the Council that the fire station would be standalone financing, so it would be considered separately. First, you have to identify the land and then get bids in, so that one might be a bit different. The other ones would likely be a combined revenue bond if you could ideally line up the bids on the substation and the wells to come in at the same time. We could then design our financing schedule and LGC schedule there. The fire station would be separate regardless.

Councilman Biggs inquired about the percentage of completion we are at for the wells and substation. We are going into the holiday season so not a lot happens in the coming month or so. Director Bell replied that we are pretty far along on the wells. The only thing we need to look at is the modeling. We know the well cost, we just need the modeling, which we might have by the end of the year. We are working with WithersRavenel on that now. We are also working with Mike Dawson on the substation. The footprint has been identified. He came down about a month ago. He is also on the line if anyone has questions for him.

Mike Dawson told the Council that one of the things he would like to touch on is that firm pricing on the entire project is not something that is possible with the substation. We have all the major pieces, the transformers, regulators, steel, and all of it needs to be bid out and acquired. Only then when we know what we are building can we put together plans for the construction portion. There are pieces that have to be put in motion to get to the final stage and he did not know how that would work with financing.

Attorney Cheatwood said he thought he understood what Mr. Dawson was saying. He thought there might be a way to work through that.

Mr. Dawson explained that one of the major factors is the steel design itself. Every steel manufacturer has a different way of putting those things together. Only then can we put it into a package for construction.

Attorney Cheatwood believed that the City had a few options and the next step after tonight would be to get on a call with the LGC and talk through this. If you have to purchase some things first, that is where the City can use its own funds on hand first to purchase some of the preliminary items. You would need a reimbursement resolution and Attorney Mize can help you with that. The LGC might allow you some financing on the front end, but we would have to talk through that. If there is need for upfront expenditures prior to getting the funding, there are ways to do that. We can potentially work around things so the City does not have to front too much cash.

Mr. Dawson noted that there were other issues as well, such as transformers could have lead-time of up to two years. We might bid in January, but we might not be able to go out for construction for 18 months.

Attorney Cheatwood was confident that those things could be worked through. If you have a break down for estimated costs that would be helpful to see with LGC staff.

Councilman Biggs said it sounded like we have a fair amount more legwork to do to iron out the technical details. He asked Manager Goodson to arrange these Attorneys Mize and Cheatwood and Mike Dawson a time to get together and bring back something more concrete on November 24<sup>th</sup>. He did not think this would be solved tonight. The second thing with the substation, where are we with the cost of service study?

Director Bell said he met with them last Friday and they are wrapping up a few things. Interim Director Lewis shared that their next meeting is next Friday at which time they will have everything to them. Director Bell added that following that meeting, they would be preparing to bring everything back to the Council.

**c. Consideration / Discussion – RZ 02-25 – The Pines (Tabled on October 13, 2025);**

Councilman Peel asked if the wetlands delineation survey had been done. Planner Lloyd explained that the wetlands delineation would be something that comes forward when it goes to plat. This golf course is about 111 acres when you put it together. Right now, all that's being proposed is a rezoning for about 11 acres worth of townhomes. If the owners or developers want to do anything beyond that, they will have to come back and go through this whole process again. The wetlands delineation comes back at preliminary plat. At this present time, this is only a rezoning. The wetland process is required, but this is a multi-pronged process. As we mentioned, we had some questions about the traffic study. They wanted to wait and do that later, which is allowed if there are conflicting circumstances.

Councilman Peel verified that if the Council approved the rezoning PUD, it would be only for these 11 acres and anything else would have to return. Planner Lloyd confirmed that was correct. There are approximately 111 acres altogether. The golf course is called open space. If they want to come back, the Council has to tell them how much they can build. The Council sets the density. If they want to build more, it would have to come back to the Council. This is far from the end of the process, and far from a site plan. At this point, they are required to show a conceptual drawing of everything that's going to be there.

Councilman Walton asked if there was any contractual agreement when the owner bought this property. Planner Lloyd said he did not know. Manager Goodson noted that we would not know and wouldn't have an effect unless there are restricted covenants. With zonings, we do have conditional zonings, but this property is not conditionally zoned. The City does not look at restricted covenants.

Councilwoman Cartwright asked if the open space considered all 18 holes. Planner Lloyd replied that he believed it did. He did not know how they intended to configure this at the end. Those are the sorts of things that are worked out at the preliminary plat process, but again, we are not there anywhere near that yet.

Councilman Gibbs felt that there were many points made and many opinions that had been stated, but from what he understood at this point, the majority of things the points were not happening yet. This is just getting things started, right? Planner Lloyd replied that was correct. This still has to go through TRC and the Planning Commission. Councilman Gibbs asked if

there would be stricter requirements as they moved forward. Planner Lloyd advised that there would be many stringent guidelines regarding location, the amount of land suitable and not suitable for development, the number of units, and so on. Councilman Gibbs verified that everything beyond this rezoning would also require approval. Planner Lloyd confirmed that it would.

Councilman Walton asked if the rezoning does not get approved by the Council, where does it go? Manager Goodson replied that if the Council denies the rezoning, everything ends for a period of one year. The applicant cannot reapply until a year has passed. The Council is the final step for right now.

Councilman Walton stated that he was a fan of controlled growth. He did not like things like what happened out by PNC. There should be buffers and a setback. You cannot just use every space of land that we have and put something on it to get more money. We have to have controlled growth if nothing else. We have too much space out there to do that.

Councilwoman Cartwright asked how the Planning Commission voted on the rezoning. Planner Lloyd advised that they voted to deny on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Cartwright asked if Planner Lloyd knew the reasoning the Planning Commission gave for not being in favor of the rezoning. Planner Lloyd replied that some of the listed concerns were traffic, building height, and character of the neighborhood. The TRC recommendation was to approve.

Councilman Gibbs asked if City staff recommended approving the rezoning. Planner Lloyd confirmed that they did.

Councilwoman Felton stated that since City staff recommended approval and any other changes would be required to return to the Council before proceeding, she was comfortable with making the motion to approve.

**Motion was made by Councilwoman Katherine Felton, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence to adopt Ordinance #2025-11-05 approving the rezoning of RZ 02-25 from R-15 to PUD-PDR along with the following consistency statement:**

***Residential R-15 to Planned Unit Development (PUD-PDR) is an acceptable rezoning, as it is consistent with the PUD process and the character of the surrounding community. While the rezoning is not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, which prescribes the future land use as Conservation and not as Medium High Density / Residential, there are neighboring properties that represent this type of development intensity. The Future Land Use Plan is meant to be used as a guide for future growth and development and is not a regulatory document.***

**Those voting in favor of the motion were: Morris, Felton, Spence, Gibbs and Peel. Against: Walton, Cartwright and Biggs. Motion carried 5:3.**

**Ordinance # 2025-11-05  
Rezoning Request RZ-02-25  
1525 North Road Street  
(Parcel ID: 891503302652 Tax Map #P142-7)**

**WHEREAS**, on August 5, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed Petition RZ-02-25, a request to rezone a 111.5-acre parcel located at 1525 N. Road Street (**ID: 891503302652 Map #P142-7**) from Residential (R-15) to Planned Unit Development (PUD-PDR); and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council called for a public hearing on August 25, 2025, which was held on October 13, 2025, at which time they considered any public comments received during the meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission voted to deny the recommendation of the project however, the City Council found the request to rezone to the parcel from Residential (R-15) to Planned Unit Development (PUD-PDR) to be consistent with the area's zoning pattern and existing land uses of adjacent properties, in spite of not being consistent with the Future Land Use Map; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed zoning will be consistent with the area’s zoning patterns;  
and

**WHEREAS**, the Joint Pasquotank County/Elizabeth City Land Use Plan was considered; and

**WHEREAS**, after consideration of the technical merits of the request during the October 13<sup>th</sup> public hearing, the City Council has approved the rezoning provided the requirements imposed by City staff are satisfied.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** that the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City does hereby approve the request to amend the Official Zoning Map to show that 111.5 acres at 1525 North Road Street (**ID: 891503302652 Map #P142-7**) located approximately 900 feet WNW from the intersection of North Road Street and Culpepper Lane be rezoned from Residential (R-15) to Planned Unit Development (PUD-PDR) and has issued the following consistency statement:

***"The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City approves the rezoning from R-15 to PUD-PDR as is consistent with the PUD process and the character of the surrounding community. While the rezoning is not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, which prescribes the future land use as Conservation and not as Medium High Density / Residential, there are neighboring properties that represent this type of development intensity. The Future Land Use Plan is meant to be used as a guide for future growth and development and is not a regulatory document.***

**ADOPTED**, this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

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E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

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April D. Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**d. Consideration – Approve Budget Amendment for Food Bank Donation;**

Interim Director Lewis reminded the Council that this amendment was the result of the request from the Council’s Emergency Session. During that meeting, the Council determined they would make a donation of \$5,000 to the Food Bank, but it would require a budget amendment, which is what this is.

Councilman Walton asked if the County voted to give a donation. Interim Director Lewis replied that he had not heard about any County donation. Councilman Walton felt that the City should give more than \$5,000 if possible. Would \$7,000 “break the bank”?

**Motion was made by Councilman Johnnie Walton to donate \$7,000 instead of \$5,000 to the Food Bank. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Rose Cartwright.**

Mayor Pro Tem Spence understood the Food Bank served many counties and asked if the donation would be for Elizabeth City only. Attorney Morgan confirmed that the representative from the Food Bank mentioned that the donation would be able to be specific to Pasquotank County. Mayor Pro Tem Spence asked if the Coast Guard would be able to utilize the Food Bank. He wanted to be certain they were not left out.

Councilwoman Felton asked if it was possible to donate half the funds to the Food Bank and half to the Coast Guard. Mayor Pro Tem Spence said he would be fine with whatever avenue was decided as long as no one was being left out.



**e. Consideration – Charlie Kirk Mural (As Added During Agenda Adjustments);**

Mayor Pro Tem Spence stated that he did not intend to negate anyone's feeling about the mural, but the Council recently had a full room of people sharing why they did not want this mural in Elizabeth City. The City Council serves as representatives for the citizens and the citizens do not want that mural. He noted that he recently heard some of Mr. Young's podcast where he mentioned he was concerned that the Council had not given an answer on whether they would entertain the request or not. He added that he was not implying that Mr. Young's feelings were inappropriate or wrong in any way.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence to deny a "Charlie Kirk mural" in Elizabeth City. The motion was seconded by Councilman Javis Gibbs.**

Councilman Walton said that his wife stayed on top of some of the political topics more than he did, so she was aware of who Charlie Kirk was. He only found out about him after the incident had taken place. Of course, he had empathy for his death and prayed for his family, but he did not have the same emotions that another person might have. To bring a mural for him here was not something he would vote for. He wished it hadn't happened, but he could not vote for it.

Councilwoman Cartwright asked if anyone came before the Council making this request. She did not recall that. Mayor Pro Tem Spence explained that Mr. Young approached the Council during public comment. He came with a poster of the mural mockup. Councilwoman Cartwright inquired if that constituted an actual request. Mayor Rivers stated that everyone has the right to come before the Council during the public comment period. The Mayor's responsibility is to set the agenda however, and this was never on the agenda. It was just a public comment item. Everyone can come and give their public remarks during a meeting.

Councilman Gibbs thought he remembered seeing an email from Mr. Young where he asked the Council asking that they officially either approve or deny. By not taking any official action, it just lingers. Mayor Rivers explained that an email was sent to the Clerk. The Clerk shared it with him and he then asked her to send it out to all members of the Council with a request that Mr. Young to contact him. He wanted to be transparent and forward it to the full Council so they would be aware of what was going on.

Councilman Biggs understood that we are trying to take action but as Councilwoman Cartwright said, can we actually take action on something that has not formally been brought forward? Legally, can we turn it down if it has not been on the agenda?

Attorney Morgan advised that Mayor Pro Tem Spence properly added the item to the agenda tonight, so the Council was clear to act on it now. The matter had also been heavily publicized.

Councilman Peel felt that it was important to be very clear that the only way something gets on the agenda is if the Council or the Mayor places it on the agenda. Just coming here to speak does not mean that something has been put on the agenda. The Council taking no action is really taking action in a way. Deciding to ignore something is taking an action in and of itself. We do not have to act on everything.

Councilman Biggs inquired if Mayor Pro Tem Spence would entertain a friendly amendment saying that that the City would not allow anything painted on City streets from this point forward rather than just zeroing in on a single person.

Mayor Pro Tem Spence reiterated that the citizens came forward last week and shared their feelings. He would like his motion to stand as originally stated with no amendment.

Councilman Biggs did not think that painting anything on City-owned streets was a core mission of local government, regardless of political views. No matter what side of the spectrum someone is on, he did not feel that government should involve itself in doing that anyway.

Councilwoman Cartwright pointed out that the proposal had other things included in it as well. She was supportive of the recommendation proposed by Councilman Biggs.

**Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence called for the question.**

Mayor Rivers reminded the Council that the motion's author did not accept the friendly amendment. The call for the question has been issued.

Councilman Walton stated that he felt things were getting deep now. People will show which side they are on quickly. Everything is according to what your perspective is. When a person shows you who they are, that is who they are. We are trying to erase what happened in the past out there on the sidewalk. Until time takes care of it, we should leave it alone. Fighting is tiring and it always boils down to the same things. Everybody wants to have it his or her way. You can look at it on a color TV but it still boils down to black and white. He had empathy for it, but did not feel that the Council should be squabbling over it. We have come a long way, but we still haven't come that far.

**Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence reiterated his call for the question.**

Mayor Rivers reminded the Council of the vote, which had been properly motioned and seconded, which was to deny the request for a "Charlie Kirk mural" in Elizabeth City.

Councilman Walton requested that the vote be taken by roll call.

**Councilman Walton: Yes**

**Councilman Biggs: Yes**

**Councilman Morris: Yes**

**Councilman Peel: Yes**

**Councilwoman Felton: Yes**

**Councilman Gibbs: Yes**

**Councilwoman Cartwright: Yes**

**Mayor Pro Tem Spence: Yes**

**Motion carried.**

**f. Presentation / Introduction to New Deputy Police Chief (As Added During Agenda Adjustments);**

Chief Graham told the Council that he selected a new deputy chief for the City of Elizabeth City. He thanked the Council for appointing him as the Chief of Police and giving him their support. The new deputy chief has 29 years of law enforcement experience, a master's degree and is working on a PhD. She has over 1,000 hours of leadership training and trained officers all over the state. When he passes the baton one day, he wants his crew to be ready to take over, and he thinks this person will be excellent. With that, he introduced Amy Snider-Wells as the new Elizabeth City Deputy Chief of Police. Mrs. Snider-Wells thanked Chief Graham and Manager Goodson. She was honored to have the opportunity to serve Elizabeth City. She started in Forsyth County in Winston Salem as a lead of detectives. She said she has a passion for training and empowering younger officers to step into their roles. She likes preparing younger officers to lead. She said she is very excited to be part of the community. Her goal is to support Chief Graham and help him provide us with a safe community. She takes the trust we are giving her seriously and is very excited to work here.

**g. Discussion – Purchasing Cards (As Added During Agenda Adjustments);**

Councilman Walton said that the information with the audit had been on the news and there's a lot of information out there. He saw that the manager gave response to the state auditor and we did make some adjustments with our handbook. Have we done what they asked us to do in that document they issued?

Manager Goodson confirmed that we have done some of it.

Councilman Walton stated that he would read through a few items and he would like Manager Goodson to let him know if we had done those things yet. "City officials should review all transactions by the former city manager and recoup personal transactions."

Manager Goodson explained that the state auditor looked at purchases from November 2022 to September 2024 and only found one item that was a personal purchase. It was a situation where the former manager had been issued a per diem and spent \$22 on his p-card. That was the single personal item discovered.

Councilman Walton asked about the next item, "The City should update the purchasing manual to reflect the current p-card processes."

Manager Goodson stated that we have not done that yet. It will be up to the Council to reflect when food purchases are necessary.

Councilman Walton read, "City officials should ensure that all p-card purchases adhere to purchasing manual and limits, including itemized receipts and reimbursements."

Manager Goodson replied that we do look at all statements. We told the auditor that we would remove junior level staff from reviewing statements and have senior level review them instead.

Councilman Walton read, "All p-card transactions from January 2024 must be reviewed and recouped if found personal."

Manager Goodson explained that was covered by the state auditor who looked into it and only one (\$22) personal charge from the former manager. We do not think we need to re-review something that was already reviewed.

Councilman Walton read, "All employees must undergo training before receiving a p-card."

Manager Goodson confirmed that has always been the practice. All employees who are issued p-cards must sign a statement agreeing to terms of use as well.

Councilman Walton read, "Officials should ensure that p-card purchase are charged to the proper account."

Manager Goodson stated that staff would be verifying each account closely. Some mistakes were mentioned but we just have to do a better job.

Councilman Walton read, "Add accurate budget account codes with specific expenditures for transparency and management."

Manager Goodson said that had not been done yet

Councilman Walton read, "Update purchasing manual to indicate clearer guidance on when and what food purchases are appropriate."

Manager Goodson advised that would be up to the Council to determine what they want to do with that.

Councilman Walton read, "Hire a permanent full-time finance director."

Manager Goodson said that he planned to hire someone by the end of the year. The job has been advertised, we have looked at applications and we will move forward when we have qualified applicants.

Councilman Walton was glad we did our due diligence and put it into our manual. If we had done some of these things in the past, we probably would not be under the microscope so much. He suggested that we should try to do everything they are asking of us as expeditiously as possible.

**7. Closed Session – As Allowed by NCGS 143.318.11(a)(6) for Discussion of Personnel;**

**Motion was made by Councilman Johnson Biggs to enter Closed Session as allowed by NCGS 143.318.11(a)(6) for Discussion of Personnel at 8:43 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilman Jarvis Gibbs. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Gibbs, Cartwright, Spence, Felton, Morris and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

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The Council returned to open session at 8:59 p.m.

**8. Adjournment:**

Having no further business to be discussed, Mayor Rivers adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

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E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

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April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

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