City of Fort Wright

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City of Fort Wright
City Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 2, 2026
6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:

The City Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Dave Hatter at 6:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. City Clerk Kerrie Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Present
Ms. Donna Ross	Present
Mr. Scott Wall	Present
Mr. Jay Weber	Present
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Present
Ms. Margie Witt	Present

Also present were Mayor Hatter, Fire Chief/Interim City Administrator Steve Schewe, City Attorney John Brooking, Police Chief Jonathan Colwell, Public Works Director Jeff Bethell, City Clerk Kerrie Holland, and Finance Clerk Nyoka Johnson.

CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

NONE

AGENDA AMMENDMENT

Mayor Hatter asked for a motion to amend the agenda to add updates on the search for the new CAO, introduce the Interim CAO, include the 2026 tax rate discussion, and add an Executive Session under KRS 61810(c) and KRS 61810(g) at the end of the agenda. Councilman Weber made a motion; Councilwoman Ross seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

MINUTES

Minutes from the August 5, 2026 City Council Meeting

Councilwoman Ross made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Councilman Collins seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

Minutes from the August 19, 2026 City Caucus Meeting

Councilman Wall made a motion to approve the minutes; Councilman Collins seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes	
Ms. Donna Ross	Abstain	
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes	
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes	
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes	
Ms. Margie Witt	Abstain	**MOTION CARRIED 4-0**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2ND Reading of Ordinance 07-2026 regarding revocation of business licenses

City Attorney Brooking read the ordinance aloud. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve Ordinance 07-2026 as written. Councilman Wessels made a motion; Councilwoman Witt seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes	
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes	
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes	
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes	
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes	
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes	**MOTION CARRIED 6-0**

Resolution 09-2026 re: the Law Enforcement Navigator (LEN) Program

Brook explained the resolution and noted that the agreed-upon changes had been incorporated. The County Attorney approved the resolution. Brook read the resolution aloud. With no further discussion, Mayor Hatter asked for a motion to approve Resolution 09-2026. Councilman Weber made a motion; Councilwoman Ross seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes	
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes	
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes	
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes	
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes	
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes	**MOTION CARRIED 6-0**

5-Year Road Plan Review/Update

Project Plan and Funding: PW Director Jeff Bethell asked whether Council wished to move forward with and approve the plan. It was noted that the largest project expense is anticipated in 2029. The engineers are working to shorten the overall construction duration. Councilman Wessels indicated that the project could be accommodated within next year's budget; however, the Finance Committee should meet to discuss potential funding sources and include the new CAO in the discussion. The Mayor recommended that the Finance Committee review the project and return with funding recommendations. The Mayor expressed concern about causing prolonged inconvenience to the neighborhood and stated a preference to shorten the anticipated five-to- seven-year construction period, if feasible. Council agreed to have the Finance Committee further review the project and funding options.

Salt Purchasing Contract and Salt Dome Update

Purchasing Contract and Salt Dome Materials: The purchasing contract remains consistent with prior years, with a slight increase in cost as anticipated. Materials for the salt dome, including brick, mortar, and shingles, have been selected. PW Director Jeff Bethell presented samples for the building. The proposed brick-and-

mortar will match the Public Works garage. The shingles will be a mix of black and brown, with a dark brown door. The shingles presented are GAF Timberline brand. Mueller has a Landmark Brand. Pricing will be compared. Councilman Weber expressed concern about the durability and longevity of the shingles and recommended considering shingles with a longer expected lifespan. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve the materials and colors presented. Councilman Wessels made a motion; Councilman Weber seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes	
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes	
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes	
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes	
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes	
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes	**MOTION CARRIED 6-0**

Ambulance Bid Opening Results

Council was advised that the anticipated completion time for a new ambulance is more than two years after the contract is signed. The new ambulance was advertised for bid for slightly more than 30 days, and one bid was received from Horton Ambulance Services in the amount of $333,785. This includes a load system and a new cot, which together consume around $50,000 of the quoted amount. The Mayor asked what factors contribute to the extended ambulance production timeline. Fire Chief Schewe explained that ongoing supply chain issues, including parts availability, continue to contribute to delays and noted that the effects of COVID-19 are still a significant factor. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve the bid from Horton Ambulance Services. Councilman Weber made a motion; Councilman Wessels seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes	
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes	
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes	
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes	
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes	
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes	**MOTION CARRIED 6-0**

NEW BUSINESS

CAO Search - Mayor Hatter introduces the Interim City Administrator, Fire Chief Steve Schewe. Mayor Hatter congratulates former CAO Jill Bailey on her retirement, notes that we are currently seeking her full-time replacement, and encourages residents, council, and current staff to share the hiring post on social media to ensure we reach the greatest number of qualified candidates. He reminds everyone that approximately 30 people have already applied, and the application deadline is September 18, 2026 @ 5:00 PM. Mayor Hatter explains the process he will use to narrow down qualified applicants. Councilman Wessels asks whether, if necessary, the council could extend the application deadline. Mayor Hatter stated that, if necessary, he could extend the deadline.

Tax Rate – Reminder, the PVA tells you what your property is worth, and the City sets the tax rate. Received the information from the NKADD, which helps to figure out what the acceptable rate and the compensating rate are. City CPA reviews the tax information. At the first meeting in October, we will discuss the new rate, with a second reading at a special meeting before the October Caucus Meeting. Mayor Hatter is proposing a 6% reduction in the current tax rate.

Highland Veterans' Day Request

The Council discussed Highland Cemetery's use of the City's PA system. Council approval is required for the continued use of the system. Mayor Hatter explains the rationale and protocols for the request and asks for a

motion to approve it. Councilman Weber made a motion; Councilman Wessels seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

1st Reading Ordinance 08-2026 re: Delinquent Tax Charge Offs

Brook explained and read the item aloud. Wessels reported that five properties on the list cannot currently be collected on because they are narrow strips of land or landlocked parcels. These properties cannot be sold and are being maintained on the list for lien purposes. If additional properties need to be added to the list, an amendment will be required. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 08-2026. Councilwoman Ross made a motion; Councilman Wall seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

1st Reading Ordinance 09-2026 re: Drone Delivery Service

City Attorney Brooking explained the ordinance and read it aloud. Councilwoman Ross asked what would occur if the proposal is approved and Walmart does not comply. Councilman Wessels stated that noncompliance would constitute a zoning violation and that the City would proceed with the standard enforcement process. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve Ordinance 09-2026. Councilman Wessels made a motion to approve; Councilwoman Ross seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Improvement Committee – NONE; Will meet in two weeks

Finance Committee - NONE

Working Group on Recreational Properties – Will meet before the next Caucus Meeting; Kennedy Playground is open, and fencing has been ordered. Landscaping will be installed to improve Aesthetics.

CAO REPORT

Fire Chief/Interim CAO Steve Schewe – Welcome to Jordan Hines, the newest part-time Fire employee. He is doing a great job. Thank you to Kerrie & Nyoka for being patient and helping in this transitional role. Continued gratitude to Chief Colwell and PW Director Jeff Bethell for doing a great job for their departments, as always.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department – Chief Colwell - Reported on the Post meeting held in August and noted that LEN was invited to speak with officers regarding logistics. Officer Capps is now assigned to the night shift and is doing well. The speed trailer was placed on E. Henry Clay for 10 days, recording 9,327 vehicles. PD will hold that number and, once the bridge project kicks off, will use it for comparison.

Public Works Director-Jeff Bethell –

Public Works/Landscaping: Council discussed ongoing issues with prior landscaping companies and reviewed landscaping quotes. The quote from Showplace Landscaping for the bed across the street was $1,300 more(for a total of $6,420), and the Kennedy Park landscaping was $2,540. Questions were raised about the landscaping company's lack of response and the higher cost of the corner bed. Councilman Wessels abstained from the discussion/action. Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve the changes in the new landscaping quote. Councilman Weber made a motion; Councilwoman Ross seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes	
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes	
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes	
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes	
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Abstain	
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes	**MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

SHCC Rental:

The SHCC rental on the 22nd was not cleaned upon return, and the key was returned late. Public Works rekeyed the lock, and the rental deposit was retained.

Kennedy Playground:

The Kennedy playground is now open and has been receiving significant use from children in the community. The first round of seed did not take; they will be reseeding.

Road Project:

Everything is going as planned. Residents are happy with the current progress

Salt Dome:

The final surface has been installed at the salt dome. If the necessary permits are received in time, construction of the structure is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, September 8.

Mayor Hatter explains how to properly file a formal complaint to receive a response. He explains that the City staff are busy, and that the length of the grass at Volunteer Park and the opening of Battery Hooper Park are not his top priorities. Battery Hooper is closed due to maintenance.

Administration

NONE

Finance

Preparing the tax role for import

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hatter mentioned the City received a thank-you from a resident regarding the dumpster provided for the storm cleanup. The mayor stated the September 16th Caucus Meeting will most likely be canceled. The public hearing on the tax rate will be on October 7th. Hoxworth Blood Drive is on September 4th, Shred is on September 19th, and Community Yard Sale is on September 11th & 12th. Fall Cleanup is October 10th from 9-10

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to go into Executive Session under KRS61810(c) and KRS61810(g). Councilman Wall made a motion; Councilman Collins seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

Mr. Jason Collins	Yes
Ms. Donna Ross	Yes
Mr. Scott Wall	Yes
Mr. Jay Weber	Yes
Mr. Bernie Wessels	Yes

Ms. Margie Witt Yes

MOTION CARRIED 6-0

Council officially entered into Executive Session at 7:03 pm.
The Council Meeting reopened to the public at 7:51 pm.
Councilman Wessels made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Collins seconded the motion. All in favor, no nays.
The Council Meeting officially adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mayor, Dave Hatter

ATTEST:

Kerrie Holland, City Clerk