



City of Fort Wright

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City of Fort Wright City Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, August 5, 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, City Administrator Jill Cain Bailey, City Attorney John Brooking, Fire Chief Steve Schewe, Police Chief Jonathan Colwell, Public Works Director Jeff Bethell, City Clerk Kerrie Holland, and Finance Clerk Nyoka Johnson.

CITIZEN COMMENTS/GUESTS

Mr. Tim Seigrist -1309 E. Henry Clay- addressed the Council regarding traffic concerns at the intersection of East Henry Clay and Fayette Avenues, particularly during rush hours. He expressed concern regarding excessive traffic, motorists failing to stop at stop signs, and vehicles exceeding posted speed limits. As the start of the school year approaches, Mr. Seigrist emphasized concerns about pedestrian and student safety. The Mayor stated that increased police presence in the area could provide a temporary solution to the traffic and safety concerns. Councilman Wessels inquired whether traffic counts had previously been conducted. It was noted that traffic counts were conducted on East Henry Clay Avenue near Bluegrass for one month approximately one year ago. Discussion continued regarding anticipated increases in traffic as additional ramps begin to close. The Mayor suggested increased police presence and the use of a radar speed trailer as possible measures to address the concerns. The CAO noted that the primary concern is the volume of traffic and speeding, which pose a potential safety hazard rather than solely a traffic enforcement issue.

AGENDA AMENDMENT

6:05 p.m. - Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to amend the agenda to move the presentation of Resolution 08-2026, Proclamation 06-2026, and the discussion of the Lexus Development Expansion Project to the top of the agenda to accommodate the guests in attendance. Councilman Wessels made a motion, and 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 08-2026 and Proclamation 06-2026

Retirement Recognition – CAO Bailey

Mayor Hatter read aloud the Proclamation and Resolution No. 08-2026 recognizing CAO Bailey upon her retirement. Council Members, staff, and the Mayor shared stories, memories, and words of appreciation in recognition of CAO Bailey's years of dedicated service and contributions to the City. Mayor

Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to accept and approve Resolution 08-2026 regarding the retirement of Jill Cain Bailey. Councilman Collins made a motion, and 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

Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to accept and approve Proclamation 06-2026 designating August 31, 2026, as Jill Cain Bailey Day. Councilwoman Ross made a motion, and 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

Lexus Development Expansion Project

Councilman Wessels recused himself from the discussion and left his seat at 6:30 p.m.

Representatives of Lexus presented plans to expand the existing dealership, including relocating and expanding parking areas to accommodate customers, employees, and vehicle inventory. The proposed improvements include drainage and sewer system work, parking lot expansion, and related site improvements. Design plans were presented to Council. Councilman Weber inquired about the landscaping plans. Lexus representatives stated that landscaping would comply with all applicable requirements and that no trees are proposed for removal, with trimming to be performed as necessary. Representatives stated that the business has continued to perform well and that the expansion is being considered approximately 3 to 3.5 years after the original development. The proposed parking improvements would allow the business to expand its operations and accommodate additional vehicle inventory. CAO advised that the proposal is not a zoning change request and that the appropriate permits must be obtained. It was noted that an existing Development Agreement remains in effect, and PDS will verify that the proposed improvements comply with the agreement. City Attorney Brook stated that he did not see anything in the Development Agreement prohibiting the proposed plan, provided it does not interfere with the three luxury automobile dealerships contemplated by the agreement. Discussion was also held regarding preserving sufficient space should a potential dealership be considered in the future. Lexus representatives stated that the additional parking area may be used for the sale of GRGT Toyota/Lexus specialty vehicles, with an anticipated sale of approximately one or two vehicles per year. Council inquired about electric vehicle charging stations. Lexus representatives stated that charging stations may be located on the south side of the property; however, the proposed new lot is primarily intended for parking and lighting improvements. Lexus representatives also noted that the business has added multiple positions, including sales, technicians, pickup-and-delivery personnel, valet staff, and lot technicians.

Councilman Wessels returned to his seat at 6:44 p.m.

MINUTES

Minutes from the July 15, 2026 Special City Council Meeting

Councilman Wessels 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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS

Pickett Drive Update/Curbs-Marty Hellmann, Verdantas

Council discussed the 2025 resurfacing project. It was noted that Pickett Drive consists of concrete pavement with an asphalt overlay. The existing asphalt was milled, and several curbs were replaced. Additional areas have been identified where curb replacement is needed. The City has worked with Riegler Construction to identify areas requiring patching or replacement. The proposed additional work is estimated at \$18,700, and Council expressed support for moving forward. It was noted that approximately \$160,000 remains under budget for the resurfacing program. General drive issues will also be addressed as part of the work. Council Member Weber left his seat at 6:52 p.m. and returned at 6:54 p.m. Marty noted that very few streets in the City have concrete pavement with an asphalt overlay, as on Pickett Drive.

Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to allow him to proceed with Verdantas for the additional work, not to exceed \$19,000. 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

Salt Storage Building Bid Results

Councilman Collins recused himself from the discussion and left his seat at 7:02 p.m.

Council discussed the bid opening for the second phase of the Salt Storage Building project, held July 30, 2026. The bid amount was approximately \$460,000, compared to the completed project estimate total of \$500,000 and an available project amount of approximately \$620,000. Schrudde & Zimmerman submitted the only and lowest bid. A discussion was held regarding several proposed changes and potential cost savings, including drainage, removal of a door and its replacement with a gate, brick exterior treatment, the rear portion of the building, and roofing materials. Removing the door would save approximately \$16,000, and eliminating the brick mirror treatment would save approximately \$26,000. Additional savings of approximately \$10,000 could be realized on the rear portion of the building. Marty recommended using aluminum in lieu of galvanized steel, resulting in estimated savings of \$6,500. Marty also presented photographs and discussed roofing options. A fabric roof would provide estimated savings of \$56,000; however, it has an anticipated 15-year life, compared to approximately 30 years for a shingle roof. Metal roofing was also discussed, with concerns noted about potential corrosion from salt exposure. The Mayor stated that the City should avoid unnecessary expenditure while also ensuring the project is completed properly. Discussion included concerns about the building's appearance and its impact on neighboring properties. Council expressed a preference for the building to be consistent in appearance with other City facilities, particularly the Public Works building. The Mayor expressed support for using shingles to match the existing Public Works building

rather than a fabric roof. The Salt Storage Building was discussed in relation to the Kennedy project, with the current project amount noted at approximately \$622,000 and the Kennedy project at approximately \$314,000. The proposed facility has an estimated salt capacity of 800 tons at approximately \$111 per ton. Councilman Collins returned to his seat at 7:22 p.m.

5 Year Road Oland Review/Update

Marty provided an update regarding the City's capital improvement projects and discussed finalizing the project schedule. He stated that the Mt. Vernon project is significant and needs to be completed, and that addressing the entire street could take approximately seven years. Valley Plaza and Viewpoint were also discussed, with approximately \$1 million anticipated over a four-year period. Council reviewed the proposed project schedule, including Viewpoint and Valley Plaza in 2027, with additional work planned for 2028 through 2031, including Mt. Vernon and Beacon Hill. The proposed Dixie Highway sidewalk project and potential grant funding for resurfacing Highland Avenue were also discussed. Marty noted that the City has applied for grants for the Highland Avenue resurfacing project and has submitted the final report. Council Member Wessels questioned the timing of the Mt. Vernon project, including the proposed 2029 schedule and the anticipated \$1.2 million cost, and asked about the funding source and whether the project should be extended into 2030. It was noted that completing the entire street is estimated at approximately \$4 million. Council discussed the various project schedules, anticipated costs, funding sources, and potential completion dates.

Mr. Hellmann expressed his best wishes to CAO Bailey upon her retirement.

1st Reading of Ordinance 07-2026 regarding revocation of business licenses

Mayor Hatter left his seat at 7:43 p.m.; Mayor Hatter returned to his seat at 7:44 p.m.

City Attorney Brooking read Ordinance No. 07-2026 aloud. A discussion was held regarding the revocation process and whether advance notice would be provided before revocation. Brook explained that the ordinance section provides the City discretion to issue notice prior to proceeding with the revocation process. Council Member Weber left his seat at 7:48 p.m. and returned at 7:50 p.m.

Witt asked whether a notice could be included on the utility bill prior to the revocation process. CAO Bailey did not think there was space on the bill to add that notice. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asked for a motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 07-2026. Councilman Wessels made a motion, and 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

2nd Reading of Ordinance 06-2026 regarding installation of new stop signs

Councilwoman Ross recused herself from the discussion and left her seat at 7:52 p.m. City Attorney Brooking reads the 2nd reading of Ordinance 06-2026 aloud. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve. Councilman Wessels made a motion, and Councilman Weber seconded the motion. Ms. Holland called the roll.

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

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Councilwoman Ross returned to her seat at 7:53 p.m.

Municipal Order 02-2026 regarding a Penny Rounding Policy

A discussion was held regarding the proposed requirement, which would apply only to cash transactions. Councilman Wessels left his seat at 7:53 p.m. and returned at 7:54 p.m. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to approve the Municipal Order 02-2026. Councilman Wall made a motion, and 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	Not present for the vote
Ms. Margie Witt	Yes

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

Resolution 09-2026 regarding participation in the LEN Program

City Attorney Brooking reads Resolution 09-2026 aloud. City Accountant, Ben Harrison, provided an updated report to CAO Bailey regarding the Law Enforcement Navigator (LEN) Program and confirmed the City's current total contribution is \$19,276.33. The program is currently being considered as a two-year trial. It was noted that representatives of the LEN Program are scheduled to attend the August 19 caucus meeting. Kenton County is continuing to review the related agreement/document. Councilman Weber made a motion to accept and approve Resolution 09-2026, and Councilwoman Ross seconded the motion. Upon further discussion of the Resolution and before roll call, it was determined that further discussion was needed on the matter; therefore, Councilmembers Weber and Ross withdrew their motions. No further action was taken.

Executive Order 01-2026 re: Appointment of Community Improvement Committee Members

Reappointing Scott Wall and Margie Witt, and appointing Donna Ross, referencing Ordinance 08-2021 which identifies the dates of the meetings and the members of council who are appointed. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Hatter asked for a motion to approve Resolution 01-2026. Councilwoman Witt 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

Resolution of 07-2026 regarding Devou Lofts Release of Mortgage

Council previously approved a \$25,000 loan to the Devou Lofts Homeowners Association, secured by an interest-bearing promissory note. The HOA has one remaining payment due this month. Upon receipt of the final payment, the loan will be paid in full, and the mortgage may be released. Council approved the release of the mortgage, contingent upon receipt of the final payment. With no further questions or discussion, Mayor Hatter asked for a motion to approve Resolution 07-2026 with the contingency. Councilman Wessels 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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Improvement Committee

No updates, Councilwoman Ross was just added to the committee. Councilwomen Witt and Ross will both be out of town for the August meeting; therefore, the next meeting will be in September.

Finance Committee

****Delinquent Properties:**** Discussed the status of delinquent properties and noted that payments had been received on a couple of accounts. It was determined that pursuing collection action on two properties would not be financially worthwhile, as the cost of proceeding would exceed the potential recovery.

****Project and Administrative Updates:**** Council reviewed expenses related to the salt dome and Kennedy projects. Signage was also discussed. All banks have been notified, and CAO Bailey will be removed effective September 1, 2026.

Working Group on Recreational Properties

****Park Planning:**** Councilman Wessels recommended postponing further discussion until the September 2026 caucus meeting. Councilwoman Witt suggested developing an overall park plan for the City, including forming a group of interested individuals to assist with the planning process; she noted that having a comprehensive plan with associated cost estimates in place would be beneficial.

CAO REPORT

****Board of Ethics:**** The Board of Ethics is scheduled to meet in October, with its report due by the end of the month. Mr. Theissen is aware of the timeline. Proposed changes to the Ethics Policy were also discussed.

****CAO Position:**** The Mayor reported that five candidates have applied for the CAO position. All application materials have been made available in SharePoint. Applications will no longer be accepted after the established deadline. The Mayor also stated that the expectation for the new CAO will be to provide a report at each forthcoming Council meeting.

****Kennedy Playground:**** An update was provided on the Kennedy Playground project. Installation was scheduled to begin; however, a shipping delay involving the play structure logs has pushed it back. The opportunity to install a hopscotch pattern at no additional cost has been addressed. The playground will include dark green, light green, and tan colors and is scheduled for completion by August 31. Councilman Wessels and Councilwoman Witt will review the site and provide recommendations regarding landscaping options. It was agreed amongst the Council to have the hopscotch pattern installed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department

Chief Colwell reported that Officer Capps graduated from the Police Academy and was .02 percent off from the highest physical fitness standard. He is currently completing field training on the day shift and will continue on days for several weeks before transitioning to night-shift training for several weeks. Upon completion of his field training, Officer Capps will begin working independently.

Fire Department

Chief Schewe reported that he and CAO Bailey conducted an interview for the part-time Firefighter/Paramedic position and will bring him on board next week. Two positions remain open. The department also received information regarding the possibility of hosting a flu vaccination clinic in September or October in partnership with Walgreens. A date has not yet been determined, but a Wednesday is being considered. There is no cost to the City; they will bill insurance directly. It will also be open to the residents.

Public Works

The Public Works Director reported that much of his report had already been discussed in the meeting, but the road project started on Monday; the first pour went down today, and it looks good. Kennedy phase one has wrapped up. Seed was laid yesterday, except for one area where access to the playground is open. Salt Storage building excavation is underway, with a target completion date of the 24th.

Administration

City Clerk Kerrie Holland is preparing to send donation request letters for the Employee Appreciation Event scheduled for November. CAO Bailey reported that Republic Bank has agreed to sponsor the event again.

Finance
NONE
Legal Counsel
NONE

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- *Hoxworth Blood Drive – September 4, 2026, from 2-4 p.m. at the City Building, Appointments preferred.
- *Annual Shred Day – September 29, 2026, from 9 am to Noon, sponsored by Ruddler, PSC.
- *Received a thank you from the Florence Police Dept to Chief Colwell and the Fort Wright Police Dept for their assistance in the funeral procession for Officer Zink.
- *Mayor thanks the Fort Wright Police Dept for their response in the recent Swatting incident in the city.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

With nothing further to address on the regular agenda, Mayor Hatter asks for a motion to enter Executive Session. Councilman Wessels made a motion, and 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

The Council entered into Executive Session at 8:38 p.m.

The meeting opened to the public at 9:15 pm. There being no further business, Councilman Weber made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Collins made a second. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:16pm.

The next City Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2026 @ 6:00 p.m. at the City Administration Building.

ATTEST:


Kerrie Holland, City Clerk

Respectfully Submitted,


Mayor, Dave Hatter