

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

Conway, Arkansas
Tuesday, 6:00 pm
August 25, 2026

On this date the City Council of the City of Conway, Arkansas met in regular session. The following members being a quorum were present and acting: Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Ledbetter, and Councilman Jones. Also, present and acting: Mayor Bart Castleberry, City Clerk Denise Hurd, and City Attorney Charles Finkenbinder. Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Hawks, and Councilwoman Isby were absent.

Call to Order: Mayor Bart Castleberry

Roll Call: Denise Hurd, City Clerk

Minutes: July 28, 2026

Councilwoman Isby made a motion to approve the minutes of the City Council meetings on July 28th, 2026 as submitted. Councilwoman Mehl seconded the motion. The motion to approve carried 5-0.

Special Presentation:

Judge Chuck Clawson gave an informative presentation to the Council on the Free C-Project, (Faulkner Recovery and Empowerment Expansion for Community). He updated the Council on the progress of this coalition organized by Faulkner County Drug Court.

Monthly Financial Report for the month ending July 31, 2026:

Tyler Winningham addressed the Council stating that the City received the first installment for the year of the LOPFI credit. He said that expenditures were high in July, such as property insurance, loan payment for the 911 radio system and the fire truck that was purchased, and July was also a three payroll month. He added that we are still within our budget, at 57%. He said the Street Fund is still waiting on Connect Conway reimbursements; the Sanitation and Airport Funds are good. He called their attention to the section on major projects funds pointing out the new sales tax revenue funds and the impact fees funds. He said that sales tax in July was down 2.8%, making three months in a row of sales tax revenues being below this time last year. Due to this fact, he showed them a report of sales tax data from the state showing figures from July 2025 and comparing them to July 2026. There was discussion among the Council about the various funds shown in the report. Mr. Winningham said that the figures point to an overall slowing of our local economy. Councilwoman Mehl made a motion to approve the monthly financial report, and Councilman Jones seconded it. The motion carried 5-0.

Report of Standing Committees:

A. Public Hearing:

- 1. Public hearing to discuss the submittal of the Outdoor Recreation Grants application for the Bike Conway Trails Grant Project for the Parks & Recreation Department.**

Mayor Castleberry opened the public hearing. Robbie Alberson addressed the Council stating that the grant is through the Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation. He said that part of the grant application is to solicit community engagement, adding that there was also a public involvement meeting on August 20th with about 60 people in attendance. He explained that attendees could make public comment or fill out comment cards available in the back of the Council Chambers. He said that the grant application is very specific, and they felt that trails were the best project to submit for this round. Terry Coddington, Bike & Pedestrian Coordinator for the City of Conway addressed the Council and introduced the members of the local biking club in attendance. He added that this grant's purpose is to create some soft surface trail connections, and improving existing trails and progression of features. He talked about the connectivity of the trails in Conway and the importance of continuing to develop them. Andrew

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Thames added that this is a great opportunity for Conway and the trails connectivity. He said that while our sporting opportunities are very successful this is a way to expand the offerings to include more biking trails. Joya Yorgey addressed the Council in favor of the grant submittal. Kensley Moore, representing the Conway Bearcats Mountain Biking Team spoke to the Council in favor of the grant. Wes Pruitt from the A&P Commission addressed the Council in favor of the grant. Mayor Castleberry pointed out that the matching funds for this grant would come from A&P Commission funding. Rory Thompson spoke in favor of the grant submittal. Ralph McKenna spoke in favor of the grant submittal. Anya DerGazarian spoke in favor of the grant submittal. Brady White and Mike Brown spoke in favor of the grant submittal. Several members of the Conway Bearcats Biking Team spoke to the Council in favor of the grant submittal. There was no one else to speak for or against the matter. Mayor Castleberry declared the public hearing closed.

Councilman Grimes made a motion to suspend the rules to move Item C4 to the top of the agenda. Councilwoman Mehl seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion carried 5-0.

C. 4. Resolution to approve applying for the Outdoor Recreation Matching Grant for the Parks & Recreation Department.

R-26-28

Councilwoman Mehl made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilman Spurgers seconded it. Councilwoman Mehl asked Robbie Alberson when a decision would be heard on the application, and he said that public hearings are held at the end of October so he thought we would hear something by the end of the year. A vote was called and the Resolution passed 5-0.

B. Community Development Committee (Airport, Community Development, Code Enforcement, Permits & Inspections, Transportation, & Planning & Development.

1. Consideration to approve waiving all three readings for the ordinances on the August 25th, 2026 City Council agenda.

There was discussion among the Council as to whether there was sufficient quorum to vote to waive the three readings. Charles Finkenbinder explained that with 5 members a vote could be taken and the Mayor could vote as well. He reiterated that all Ordinances of a general and permanent nature should be read three times on separate days although the law does allow the Council to waive the readings. There was discussion about how conducting the three readings would delay action in some cases such as rezonings. Several Councilmembers agreed that there are many opportunities for citizens to be informed without delaying the process of development. There was discussion regarding which type of ordinances would be considered permanent in nature. Councilman Grimes made a motion to approve waiving all three readings and Councilman Ledbetter seconded the motion. It was clarified that the Council was not voting on a change of policy but just the items on the agenda. A vote was called and the motion carried 6-0, with Mayor Castleberry voting "yes".

2. Ordinance appropriating grant reimbursement funds for the Conway Tree Board.

O-26-49

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B2 to the Council. Anne Tucker told the Council that the Tree Board has been working toward the Conway Community Forestry Plan, through Davey Resource Group and they have had to pay them along the way. She said that this appropriation is reimbursement for that grant in the amount of \$122,738.72. Councilwoman Mehl made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilman Spurgers seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Spurgers, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Grimes, and Councilman Jones. The Ordinance passed 5-0.

3. **Ordinance to approve a private club permit location for Smoke N' Bones located at 1025 S. Amity Rd.**

O-26-50

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B3 to the Council. A representative from the applicant addressed the Council stating the history of the restaurant and what Conway could expect from the new location. Councilman Spurgers made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilman Ledbetter seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, and Councilman Ledbetter. The Ordinance passed 5-0.

4. **Consideration to approve a conditional use permit to allow up to 18 units per acre at the property located at 1050 Andrews Dr.**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B4 to the Council. Anne Tucker told the Council that the applicant is asking for a CUP to have 18 units per acre. She said the parcel is currently zoned C-2 and has a CUP attached that will expire upon approval of the new permit. She added that the applicant is asking for MF-2 density which would allow the 18 units per acre, and the acreage would allow 97 units not taking infrastructure into account. She said that it would likely end up accommodating 75 units. She showed the Council the planned entrances, two off of Andrews and one off of Museum Drive. She said that there are 9 conditions attached and would abide by C-2 zoning regulations on lot coverage and setbacks, and the applicant has agreed to all of the conditions. Landon Sanders addressed the Council on behalf of the applicant stating that they are in agreement with the conditions stated. He added that the traffic count would not exceed what was allowed by right. There was some discussion among the Council as to traffic concerns regarding pick up and drop off at Theo Jones elementary. Ms. Tucker said that those issues would be dealt with in site development review. Mayor Castleberry opened the floor for any public input. There was no one present to speak for or against the matter. Councilman Spurgers made a motion to approve the conditional use permit, and Councilman Ledbetter seconded the motion. A vote was called and the consideration was approved 5-0.

5. **Consideration to approve a conditional use permit to allow an Automobile Wash Service for the property located at 800 S. Donaghey Avenue.**

This item was removed from the agenda. Anne Tucker stated that the item would be on the September 22, 2026 agenda.

6. **Ordinance to rezone property located at 125 Conway Boulevard from S-1 to R-2.**

O-26-51

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B6 to the Council. Anne Tucker reminded the Council that the next three rezonings were not considered at the last meeting because they died for lack of a second to the motion to adopt. She added that because they were not considered the 12 month waiting period does not apply. She asked the Council to make a decision on the three rezonings. She told them they could make a motion in the positive and vote either up or down, or they could amend the motion to reduce the zoning to R-2A, with a vote up or down, or a motion to remand back to the Planning Commission to work out the proper zoning. Although she reminded them that Planning Commission had already approved unanimously the R-2 zoning. She showed the Council the original plat showing 50' lots, stating that lot lines had changed over the years, some were merged. She reminded them that a duplex in an R-2 zone requires a 50' wide lot, R-2A requires a 100' wide lot. She said that in either scenario one duplex per lot is allowed. She added that if a 100' lot that has been zoned R-2A, it can be replatted into two lots, build two single family dwellings with an accessory building. Mayor Castleberry opened the floor for comments. Mrs. Walters who had

spoken against the rezoning at the last meeting was present to address the Council. She reiterated her objection to the density proposed due to the property being in the Old Conway Overlay District. She stated that the density would adversely affect the characteristics of the neighborhood. Lou Zamora representing Mr. Patel, the applicant for the rezoning spoke in favor of the matter. He explained that Mr. Patel's desire was to create more affordable housing for Conway and to improve the area in question. He added that the duplexes planned for the properties would be overseen by the Historic District Commission as required. Lisa Martin, the real estate agent involved in the sale transaction between Mr. Patel and Conway Baptist College for some of the properties in question spoke in favor of the rezoning. She shared a statement of support for the rezoning from CBC President, Dr. Langley. There was no one else present to speak for or against the matter. Councilman Grimes stated that his opinion had not changed and that while he felt there are places in Conway where R-2 zoning is appropriate, he did not feel that it is appropriate in this location. He made a motion to reduce the zoning to R-2A. However, Mr. Zamora stated that Mr. Patel would not be agreeable to that zoning and would not proceed with the purchase. Councilman Grimes retracted his motion and made a motion to adopt the Ordinance as presented. Councilwoman Mehl seconded the motion. The Clerk called the roll with the following vote: "Aye": Councilman Ledbetter. "No": Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, and Councilman Jones. The Ordinance failed 4-1.

7. Ordinance to rezone property located at 113 Conway Boulevard from S-1 & R-2-A to R-2.

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B7 to the Council. Councilman Grimes made a motion to adopt the Ordinance as written, and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. Councilman Jones was not in favor of proceeding without the owner present. Councilman Spurgers expressed reluctance to proceed as well. Anne Tucker asked the Council to table the item until the owner could be present. Councilman Grimes withdrew his motion and Councilwoman Mehl withdrew her second. Councilman Grimes made a motion to table the item until the next meeting and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The motion to table carried 5-0.

8. Ordinance to rezone property located at 141 Conway Boulevard from S-1 to R-2.

O-26-52

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B8 to the Council. Councilman Grimes made a motion to adopt the Ordinance as written, and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. There was no more discussion on the matter. The Clerk called the roll with the following vote: "Aye": Councilman Ledbetter. "No": Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, and Councilman Jones. The Ordinance failed 4-1.

C. Public Service Committee (Physical Plant, Parks & Recreation, & Sanitation)

1. Resolution to approve applying for funding for the Best Friends Grant Program for Conway Animal Services.

R-26-29

Mayor Castleberry presented Item C1 to the Council. Spencer Clawson told the Council that BFAS has extended the offer to apply for a grant in the amount of \$3,000, the funding to go toward a neo-natal kitten foster program. Councilman Spurgers made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilman Ledbetter seconded it. A vote was called and the Resolution passed 5-0.

2. Resolution to approve the purchase of truck scales for the Department of Sanitation.

R-26-30

Mayor Castleberry presented Item C2 to the Council. Joe Hopper told the Council that the truck scales were 22 years old and beyond repair at this point. He added that they sent out requests for

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bids in July and received one competitive bid from System Scales in the amount of \$238,025 and added that the purchase included in their 2026 budget. Councilwoman Mehl made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilman Spurgers seconded it. A vote was called and the Resolution passed 5-0.

3. Consideration to approve the removal of inventory (Vehicles) for the Parks & Recreation Department.

Mayor Castleberry presented Item C3 to the Council. Andrew Thames told the Council that they had a Dodge Durango to remove from inventory. Councilwoman Mehl made a motion to approve the consideration, and Councilman Jones seconded it. A vote was called and the consideration was approved 5-0.

4. This item was moved to the top of the agenda.

5. Ordinance to appropriate funds for the replacement of the HVAC units for the Conway Expo & Event Center.

O-26-53

Mayor Castleberry presented Item C5 to the Council. Andrew Thames told the Council that there are 12 units at the Expo Center that are inoperative. He said that they are asking to enter into an agreement with Four Seasons in the amount of \$365,000 from the Advertising and Promotion fund balance. Charles Finkenbinder clarified that when purchases are made through TIPUSA the bidding is not waived, it means we are "piggy-backing" on someone else who has already put it out for bids. He added that it is a streamline process allowed by law that helps cities save money by going through a bid process that someone else has already done. Councilman Spurgers asked how old the units were that were being replaced, and Mr. Thames stated that they are as old as the building which was built in 2017. There was discussion that the Expo Center is operating all the time. Councilman Spurgers asked about the garage doors being open for long periods of time. Mr. Thames stated that for many events when there is unloading/loading happening that the garage doors would have to be opened for periods of time. Councilman Spurgers asked if we have a maintenance contract on the units and Mr. Thames said we have not but one will be implanted with the new units. Councilman Spurgers made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting: "Aye": Councilman Grimes, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Ledbetter, and Councilman Jones. The Ordinance passed 5-0.

Adjournment-----

PASSED this 25th day of August, 2026

APPROVED:

Mayor, Bart Castleberry

City Clerk, Denise Hurd