



MINUTES

Mayor & Council Meeting

February 3, 2025 • 6:00 PM



ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor, Amy Williford
Councilmember, Lucy Gamble
Councilmember, Donna Whitley
Councilmember, Kim Arnell

CITY STAFF:

Court Clerk, April Fordham
Water Superintendent, Tim Robison
Interim Police Chief, Keith Creel

The Mayor and City Council met for a regular meeting on February 3, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Amy Williford at 6:01pm, stating we had a quorum and requesting everyone to silence all electronic devices.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by: Councilmember Arnell to approve agenda as written, **Second by:** Councilmember Whitley; **Motion approved** with no objections

Minutes for Approval:

Public Hearing December 17, 2024
Council Meeting minutes January 7, 2025

Motion by: Councilmember Gamble to approve all minutes as written, **Second by:** Councilmember Arnell; **Motion approved** with no objections

Business Session:

Councilmember Whitley: **Motion to table** purchase of Flock cameras, reducing the speed on Wellington Mill Road, and Depot Street at South Five North traffic issues

Second by: Councilmember Gamble; **Motion approved** with no objections

Mayor Williford:

1. The Police Department needs to purchase a ballistic vest for SRO Tongate at the cost quoted from Smyrna Police Distributors of \$1610.
Motion by Councilmember Whitley to approve purchase of vest as quoted; **Second by:** Councilmember Gamble; **Motion approved** with no objections
2. The Police Department needs to purchase a push bumper for the 2020 Dodge Charger. This is not for PIT maneuvers but to protect the car and officer in an accident.
Councilmember Arnell asked if the other Dodge has one.
Interim Chief Creel: No. Only one of the vehicles is in use right now so the need is only for one right now.
Councilmember Arnell: Would it save the City money to have them installed on both of the Dodge Chargers and the Chief's vehicle at once since they will all need them eventually?

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Councilmember Arnell: **Motion to table** until work session for that Interim Chief Creel can get a quote for all three vehicles. **Second by:** Councilmember Gamble; **Motion approved** with no objections

3. The Police Department needs a new laptop for Cpl. Purcell's vehicle.
Councilmember Arnell got a quote of approximately \$425 for a laptop with 12GB.
Motion by Councilmember Arnell to purchase laptop as quoted; **Second by:** Councilmember Whitley; **Motion approved** with no objections
4. The Police Department needs new batteries for three of the radios. Previously, knock-off batteries had been purchased, and they do not last a whole shift. The cost of new Motorola batteries with 1 year warranty is \$160 each.
Motion by Councilmember Whitley to approve purchase of 3 radio batteries at \$160 each; **Second by:** Councilmember Gamble; **Motion approved** with no objections
5. The school is hosting a silent disco on February 14 as a reward for students. The Police Department has been asked to sponsor the cost of the headphone rental using RedSpeed funds. The cost is \$678.00.
Motion by Councilmember Whitley to approve rental of headphones for the silent disco using RedSpeed funds; **Second by:** Councilmember Arnell; **Motion approved** with no objections
6. The City has received two bids for the remodel of the recreation building lobby. Superintendent Robison asked if the City could have any metal removed from building to have in case it is needed for other projects. Mayor Williford was told that would reduce the project by ½ day labor plus expenses.
Councilmember Arnell: We need more lighting than is indicated in the bid.
Councilmember Gamble: What kind of baseboards will be used as she is concerned about possible water damage down the road.
Councilmember Arnell suggested that with the drop-down ceilings another way would need to be made to access the air unit above the storage room, possibly drop downstairs into the storage room. He is also concerned about how long the remodel will take since the building is needed for council meetings and court.
Ben Skipper (citizen): The county uses fixtures with light bulbs that are replaceable at \$1 each instead of the units being recommended that are approximately \$80 each and must be replaced in whole when the light burns out.
Motion by Councilmember Gamble to approve hiring Premier to remodel the recreation building lobby at a cost of no more than \$25,000 with changes to baseboards and lights, to be paid using SPLOST funds; **Second by** Councilmember Arnell; **Motion approved** with no objections

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Citizen comments:

Ben Skipper- citizen, Carroll County Parks Director

Wants to recognize Interim Chief Creel and Officer Young and K-9 Officer Molly for the incident they responded to on February 2. It was handled within 30 minutes, and he is appreciative of the work they put in. He says he has had issues with poachers and other incidents in the parks and Whitesburg PD always responds even though they do not have to since it is outside of the city limits. Thank you also to Robert Gamble for handling the lightning strike on July 4, 2024.

On a personal note, he wants the PD to monitor speed more on Highway 16 and for the City to talk to Matt Brass about enlarging the roundabout.

Officer Austin Purcell- Whitesburg PD

He appreciates working with Interim Chief Creel and believes that he has the City's best interests at heart. He is familiar with the city and its residents and does his best to keep the city safe for everyone.

Officer Sean Armstrong- Whitesburg PD

He loves working with Interim Chief Creel and left a better paying job to come back and be part of the department because of the people.

Officer Heather Young- Whitesburg PD

Appreciates Interim Chief Creel's dedication to the department and that he is approachable, which is difficult to find in a chief.

Karen Holloway- citizen

She appreciates the police department and everything they have done for the community. She respects that the department works so well together.

Mayor/ Council/ Staff Comments:

- **Interim Chief Creel:**
 - The officers are back on track writing citations. We are working on getting Officer Purcell into a speed certification class.
- **Water Superintendent Robison:**
 - We have received 2 bids for roadwork. They will be available for review at the work session.
- **Councilmember Arnell:** Concerned about Keith Creel as candidate for the position of chief. He feels he has not been kept in the loop about things going on with the Police Department.
 - Councilmember Whitley: She has shared everything by email but many things that have been sent out needed to be addressed quickly.
 - Councilmember Arnell: He has only heard bad things about the department.

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- Interim Chief Creel: He is just working to do his best for the City and the department. All purchases are being sent through the proper channels.
- Councilmember Whitley: Since there is no council member over the Police Department right now all council members should be checking in with them
- Councilmember Arnell: He is talked to people in other places and heard bad things.
- Mayor Williford: She has seen him do lots personally for people in the community, including giving them gas money or food.
- Councilmember Arnell: Jeff Richards, Creel's supervisor at the Sheriff's Department is the one he has spoken to about Creel. He is also concerned that he was not given other options besides Creel as potential candidates for chief.
- Councilmember Whitley: Our policies state that, when possible, we will seek to fill positions from within.
- Councilmember Gamble: She values honesty and motivation to get things done but is concerned about not being included in decisions.
- Councilmember Arnell: Wants to have someone trained as a back-up chief just in case so that we have someone else who knows what's going on if something were to happen to the chief
- Councilmember Whitley: Motion to amend the agenda to include voting on the new police chief and electing Keith Creel as chief; Second by Councilmember Gamble; Motion approved with none opposed.
- Councilmember Whitley: Plea to citizens to attend the hearings regarding House Bill 581

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilmember Arnell; **Second by** Councilmember Gamble; **Motion approved** with none opposed.

The February 3, 2025 Mayor & Council Meeting ended at 7:50 pm.

Amy R Williford, Mayor

ATTEST: Clerk

Notice is hereby given that The City of Whitesburg Mayor and Council intends to opt out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for the City of Whitesburg. All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this matter to be held at the Council Chambers, 50 Booster Field Road, Whitesburg, GA 30185 on February 10, 2025, at 12:00pm. Times and places of additional public hearings on this matter are at the Council Chambers, 50 Booster Field Road, Whitesburg, GA 30185 on February 13, 2025, at 6:00pm and February 20, 2025, at 6:00pm.

March 3, 2025, Council Meeting has been rescheduled to March 10, 2025

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