

**FAYETTEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT MINUTES
DOROTHY GILMORE THERAPEUTIC RECREATION CENTER
PURDUE DRIVE, FAYETTEVILLE
FEBRUARY 4, 2026
9:00 A.M.**

Present: Mayor Mitch Colvin

Council Members Stephon Ferguson (District 1); Malik Davis (District 2); Antonio Jones (District 3); D. J. Haire (District 4); Lynne Greene (District 5); Derrick Thompson (District 6) (departed at 4:40 p.m.); Brenda McNair (District 7); Shaun McMillan (District 8); Deno Hondros (District 9)

Others Present: Douglas Hewett, City Manager
Lachelle Pulliam, City Attorney
Kelly Strickland, Assistant City Manager
Jeffrey Yates, Assistant City Manager
Jodi Phelps, Assistant City Manager
Roberto Bryan, Police Chief
Kevin Dove, Fire Chief
Willie Henry, Chief Information Officer
Tiffany Murray, Chief Financial Officer
Gerald Newton, Development Services Director
Christopher Cauley, Economic & Community Development Director
Sheila Thomas-Ambat, Public Services Director
Jerry Clipp, Human Resource Development Director
Michael Gibson, Parks, Recreation and Maintenance Director
Tyffany Neal, Transit Director
Rose Rasmussen, Internal Audit Director
Yamile Nazar, Human Relations Director
John Jones, Office of Community Safety Director
Andrew LaGala, Airport Director
Michelle Brooks, Interim Budget Director
Chris Lowery, Strategic Planning & Analytics Manager
Andrew Brayboy, Senior Corporate Performance Analyst
Christopher Williams, Management Analyst
Andrew Mansell, City Manager's Office Intern
Jennifer Ayre, City Clerk
Members of the Public

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Colvin called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance and requested Mayor Pro Tem Thompson provide the invocation.

2.0 ITEMS OF BUSINESS – FY 2026 STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

Ms. Julie Brenman, Senior Consultant, Fountain Works, introduced herself and Ms. Laura Robinson, Learning and Development Manager. Ms. Brenman thanked everyone for coming and provided an overview for the day, stating everyone in the room has a shared commitment to public service and shared desire to make Fayetteville a better place. The goal is to end with Council priorities for the near and long term and identify how to adhere to them.

An exercise was completed by Council on what motivates them and what needs to be protected, changed, or improved for the public. Some motivations included the people/community, the need for effective leadership, forward thinking, the future of the City, and safety. Ms. Brenman stated it is important to remember that everyone is here for many of the same reasons and even though there are individual goals, everyone is here for the betterment of Fayetteville.

Thriving communities and effective organizations create a 20–30 year Comprehensive Plan, 5-10 year Capital Improvement Plans & Master Plans that are tied to funding opportunities, 3-5 year Strategic Plans, 1-2 year governing body priorities, budget, and operational workplans created by staff. While each plan is created, there are opportunities for small amendments throughout their lifetime. Ms. Brenman stated the focus is to identify 4-5 priorities to emphasize this term and how to hold yourselves accountable. Discussion ensued

regarding how to ensure the plans fit together both internally and regionally. An overview of organizational strategic planning elements was reviewed.

Fayetteville currently has six focus areas and staff are recommending streamlining the focus areas from six to five to ensure there is not overlap or confusion of the strategic areas, in order to create a stronger foundation in achieving goals. The proposed goals are: Goal 1: Safe and Secure Community protecting people, neighborhoods, and daily safety; Goal 2: Economic and Strategic Growth, jobs, tax base, land use, and smart growth aligned in one goal area; Goal 3: Desirable Place to Live Work and Recreate, the quality of life residents experience every day; Goal 4: Financially Sound City Providing Exemplary Services how the City operates and sustains itself long-term; and Goal 5: Collaborative Citizen and Business Engagement to build trust through transparency, communication, and partnerships. Council Member McMillan recommended adding a goal that is specific to environmental sustainability.

The Council priorities were reviewed within the new goals and Council Members participated in breakout sessions to discuss the five goals with staff.

Mr. Jeffery Yates, Assistant City Manager, and Ms. Michelle Brooks, Interim Budget Director, presented the Fiscal Year 2027 Foundational Landscape with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation focused on system stressors such as financial, staffing, capacity, service demand, public opinion, and economic. Mr. Yates provided an overview of the budgetary landscape that focused on the estimated revenues, revenue growth and the unfunded demand for services, and how the budget must be balanced. Discussion ensued regarding the County changing from ad valorem and how it affected City revenue. Staff's focus is to maintain and fill current assets and staff positions, complete existing projects, adopt realistic capital plans, and maintain a sustainable budget. Discussion ensued. Dr. Hewett stated he will work with staff to create a maintenance needs plan.

Mayor Colvin recessed the meeting at 12:17 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

Mr. Robert Van Geons, Fayetteville-Cumberland Economic Development Corporation President and CEO, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the North Carolina Tiers Ranking System. The State looks at adjusted property tax base per capital, median household income, unemployment rate, and population growth. Cumberland County has increased in rank in all matrices except for population growth. It does not measure quality of life, cost of living, or satisfaction, and does not reflect the local capacity. To address Tier 1 criteria at the City-level, the Council can continue efforts to improve quality of life and safety enhancements, grow the next generation workforce efforts, develop a corridor development strategy and continue to support local entrepreneurship. Discussion ensued.

The Council participated in a Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities analysis exercise to identify what is working in the City's favor, what is slowing us down, and where does the City see possibility, if navigated well. Council recognized that many of the City's strengths are also the challenges. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Brenman reviewed the 2024 vision themes and ideas discussed during the pre-meetings between Fountain Works and Council Members. Using the goals of Safe & Secure Community, Economic & Strategic Growth, Desirable Place to Live, Work & Recreate, Financially Sound City Providing Exemplary Services, and Collaborative Citizen & Business Engagement, Council identified what success looks like in 5-10 years. Discussion ensued. Council focused on different ways to provide information to residents. Dr. Hewett stated the lack of participation from residents does not mean they are not informed.

Ms. Brenman led the City Council through a priorities exercise in the next 1-2 years with a focus on what new items to begin, what to continue and reinforce, what needs to be ended, and what needs to be adjusted or done differently. Mayor Colvin stated many of the new recommendations have alignment with the priorities from last year. Discussion ensued. Mr. Chris Lowery, Strategic Planning & Analytics Manager stated there is movement in every priority, whether in planning or execution phases. The priorities were specifically determined to be multi-year that many of the recommendations fall within. Each priority has multiple tasks within them.

The four top priorities identified were:

- Comprehensive Approach to Community Safety.
- Enhance Economic Growth Throughout the City.
- Continue Revitalization Efforts and Housing and Neighborhood Needs.
- Evaluate and Expand Transportation, Infrastructure, and Connectivity.

MOTION: Council Member Hondros to add priorities to the City Council Agenda Item Request Form

SECOND: Council Member Haire

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Council Member McMillan requested a friendly amendment to keep Goals on the City Council Agenda Item Request Form

Council Member Hondros did not accept the friendly amendment.

VOTE: PASSED (8-1) Opposed Council Member McMillan

Discussion ensued regarding the BUILD Grant and Federal Legislative Agenda.

3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JENNIFER L. AYRE
City Clerk
020426

MITCH COLVIN
Mayor