



MINUTES

The King City Council convened for its regular meeting at the King City Hall, Council Chambers, 229 S. Main St, King, on Monday, January 5, 2026, at 6:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and make decisions on various city matters. Present at the meeting were Councilman Tyler Bowles, Mayor Pro Tem Jane Cole, Mayor Rick McCraw, Councilwoman Terri Fowler, Councilman Michael Lane, City Engineer Ben Marion, City Attorney Brad Friesen, City Manager Scott Barrow, City Clerk Nicole Branshaw, Director of Finance and Personnel Susan O'Brien, Fire Chief Steven Roberson, Police Chief Jordan Boyette, Senior Center Director Paula Hall, Intern City Planner Emerson Wright, Police Lt. M. Perdue, Building Inspector Ricky Gordon, Collections Clerk Tiffany George, and Chaplain Rick Hughes.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM on Monday, January 5, 2026. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited with all remaining standing for the invocation given by Chaplain Rick Hughes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor McCraw highlighted several key announcements from the agenda. The mayor asked the council and staff if there were any additions or subtractions to make from the announcements. There were none. He also wished everyone a Happy New Year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor McCraw opened public comment at 6:03 PM, reading the full guidelines for public participation, including the requirement for speakers to provide their name and address, maintain courteous language, and adhere to the 3-minute time limit per speaker.

1. Marlene McCraw, 509 Whispering Creek Road, addressed the council regarding the 2025 King Christmas tree lighting event. She explained that due to inclement weather, the event was held on December 12th at King Central Park instead of the annual first Friday in December. McCraw noted that this year's event was dedicated to Gina Calloway, who passed away in August 2025. "She was instrumental in planning and organizing the tree lighting event," McCraw said. "Gina's heart for this community, her dedication, and her willingness to serve others embodied the spirit of Christmas. This event reflected the values she represented: kindness, connection, and care for the people of King."

2. Patricia King, 125 Campbell Ridge Circle, approached with concerns about water bills. She asked why water bills were "like, 3 days back instead of, like, the same they're supposed to be every month." She explained that for years the billing had been consistent, but this year it was "like, 3 days back," which created hardship for those who only get paid on the third of the month. She emphasized the difficulty this caused: "We have to, like, borrow money to pay our water bill and stuff, and we're not getting letters letting us know that they're going to do that." The Mayor suggested she visit City Hall to speak with the City Manager about the issue.

3. Alex Stark, 804 Brookstone Way, raised concerns about water and sewer bills, stating, "I happen to be single, and I have no idea who sets the prices for this?" She questioned why her bill was "the same as a family

of 6" and asked who sets the rates. She also mentioned that Kyle Hall had told her the city received \$2 million in 2021 to help renovate the sewage treatment plant, asking, "What happened to the money there?" The Mayor directed her to speak with City Manager Scott Barrow at City Hall.

4. **John Knight, 526 Burlwood Drive**, echoed with similar concerns about high water bills and questioned why wastewater continues to be sent "down south when we have a treatment plant right here in the town that should be rebuilt." He expressed frustration about the financial burden on residents, particularly those on fixed incomes: "There are many people where I live that live on a fixed income, and it just went up on our rent again, and that's going to be hurting a lot of community people in our area." He emphasized the urgency: "It's time to do something here. You're opening up all these houses here. It's not like you're not getting enough money to open it up, and it needs to be done." Knight also raised a traffic safety concern about the need for a traffic light "right down the road here by the flower shop," noting heavy commute traffic from both directions and warning, "It's due to have a bad accident."

There being no one else to give written or verbal requests, wishing to speak, Mayor McCraw closed the public comment portion of the meeting at 6:12 p.m., thanking all speakers for their public comments. ****SEE DOCUMENT 1****

1. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

The mayor asked the council and staff if there were any adjustments to the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Jane Cole said, "We want to add 2D to the consent agenda? And we need to talk about that." Mayor McCraw responded with, "Yes, ma'am. 2D was added to the consent agenda." Councilwoman Fowler replied, "I'd like for us to pull that off and have a conversation about it." The mayor asked where they would like to place it. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to place it as item 3B, Martin Luther King Jr Holiday Policy Amendment.

MOTION: Councilwoman Fowler moved to approve the agenda with noted changes. Councilman Lane seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor McCraw explained that the consent agenda items were considered noncontroversial and administrative in nature. The mayor noted they had gone through the consent agenda and would discuss the pulled item separately as item 3B, Martin Luther King Jr Holiday Policy Amendment.

The following consent items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes

- a. December 1, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting
- b. December 12, 2025, Called City Council Meeting

B. Set A Public Hearing Date for Gary Bowman's Request for a Special Use Permit to Construct 7 Apartment Units on Pineview Drive.

C. Set a Public Hearing Date for a Voluntary Annexation Request by Alice R. & Garry L. Merritt (7'G's, LLC).

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tem Jane Cole motioned to approve the consent agenda as amended. Councilwoman Fowler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

3. NEW EMPLOYEE

A. Introduction to New Employee:

- a. Catherine Tucker – School Resource Officer

Catherine Tucker was introduced as the new School Resource Officer. The Council welcomed her, saying, thank you for your heart to be an SRO.

B. Martin Luther King Jr Holiday Policy Amendment

The mayor noted that the council had moved item 2D from the consent agenda to be discussed as item 3B. Due to the increasing number of employees requesting to use the floating option for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, the following amendment to the Personnel Policy is requested: make the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday a Paid Holiday Observed for all employees, removing the floating option, with city offices closed as with all other paid holidays.

Current Language

Section 3. Paid Holidays Observed

With the exception of employees who are on suspension (with or without pay) and employees who are on unpaid medical leave (including FMLA, Long-term disability or leave without pay), all full-time employees appointed to a permanently established position, and part-time employees normally scheduled to work on the day on which the holiday falls, shall receive the following days and such other days as the City may designate as holidays with pay:

New Year's Day, Good Friday (Easter), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving Day

Martin Luther King Day (City offices remain open; employees have the option to use the holiday on a designated day or at another time)

Proposed Language

Martin Luther King Day ~~(City offices remain open; employees have the option to use the holiday on a designated day or at another time)~~

After much discussion, staff noted that this has been a floating holiday since 2006 or 2007. Councilwoman Fowler opposed the change, emphasizing the flexibility and perk it offers employees and urging the council to keep it as it is. Ben Marion, City Engineer, highlighted operational issues with open offices needing staff presence. Mayor Pro Tem Cole proposed a compromise of using a skeleton crew and rotating staff annually. Councilman Bowles favored the floating option. City Manager Barrow mentioned he saw both perspectives. The discussion focused on balancing employee flexibility with citizen service. Councilman Lane felt that, while looking at other jurisdictions and the fact that it is a federal holiday, it's pretty socially acceptable to be closed that day.

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tem Jane Cole moved to retain flexibility for employees with department head supervision while maintaining a skeleton crew in each department. Councilwoman Fowler seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a vote of 3-1. (Bowles-Aye, Cole-Aye, Fowler-Aye, Lane-Nay)

4. ACTION ITEMS

A. Stokes Municipal Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Resolution Amendment

The chairman of the Stokes Municipal ABC Board, Brian Booe, addressed the council, explaining the need to update the merger agreement now that both stores are profitable. He stated the distributions would remain at 100% in their originating municipalities, with the King Council's approval required before presenting the amendment to Walnut Cove commissioners. Quarterly audits are now in place, and the first check of \$26,284.18 has been issued, benefiting the general fund, the King Police Department, and alcohol education per statute. Mayor Pro Tem Jane Cole and Councilwoman Fowler praised the hard work and positive regional reputation. The chairman also mentioned plans for store upgrades.

MOTION: Mayor Pro Tem Cole moved for approval of the resolution amending section 1.7 of the merger agreement between the Town of Walnut Cove and the City of King. Councilwoman Fowler seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0. (Bowles-Aye, Cole-Aye, Fowler-Aye, Lane-Abstained)

B. Interlocal Agreement with Village of Tobaccoville's Bulk Item Pickup

The Village of Tobaccoville is requesting assistance with its annual bulky-item waste removal again this year.

City of King Public Works staff have met with Village Administrator Lori Shore to discuss the details of renewing the Interlocal Agreement to assist with the service again this year. The mutually agreed-upon service days would be Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday for two consecutive weeks, without altering our Monday and Wednesday routes. Tobaccoville will supply the fuel, the staging area, and the disposal. We simply supply the grapple truck, trailer, dump truck, and public works staff for a daily fee. The dates discussed with the Village of Tobaccoville were April 28th, 30th, May 1st, 5th, 7th, and 8th.

Adds \$2375 (5 days) in revenue back to the General Fund for the six days of work. Staff recommends approving the FY 25-26 Interlocal Agreement.

MOTION: Councilwoman Terri Fowler made a motion to approve the interlocal agreement with the village of Tobaccoville bulk item pickup. Mayor Pro Tem Cole seconded. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

C. PUBLIC HEARING:

Amend Chapter 32. – Zoning; Art. I. – General, Sec. 32-8. – Definitions. Amend Chapter 32. – Zoning; Art. IV. – Uses By Zoning District, Sec. 32-198. – Commercial. Add New Section to Chapter 32. – Zoning; Art. V. – Development Standards, Div. 1. – General, Sec. 32-262. - Hemp Establishments.

Emerson Wright, Intern City Planner, presented: "Council recently discussed adding standards to our zoning ordinance regarding the sale of hemp-type products. Our attorney has drafted some definitions of hemp-type substances and added them to our list of uses. Then he has added a new section on some recommended standards for hemp-type stores."

Wright explained, "We needed to hold the public hearing, and then the council can adopt the text amendment as is or with amendments. Planning board recommends using 15(%) percent of the total sales for the number that would make the store a hemp store, but the council may want to adjust this number up or down."

He added, "As in doing research after the Planning Board meeting, I discovered that the only other city around here that has regulations on this is Mount Airy, and their percentage is 25 percent of gross sales that make it a hemp store. So, if you all like that recommendation, you can go with that or decide on a different percentage number."

Mayor Pro Tem Jane Cole asked, "How tight can it go? What was the lowest percent you can have this at?" When told there wasn't a minimum, she asked, "So if we did 10 percent?"

The attorney responded, "It's a policy question. I mean, the question is, of all of the items the store sells, how many of those have to be the hemp-derived consumable products or hemp just produce hemp-derived products to define in the order? The store folks like 100 percent of the store sales to that, or is it some small incidental thing, and yet we're still going to zone it as a hemp store? That's the policy question."

The attorney explained that the staff had suggested 40 percent, and the planning board recommended 15 percent, which would be more stringent. He cautioned, "At some point, I imagine there I don't know whether, for example and this is why it's a policy question, not a good question for your attorney, but whether a pharmacy selling CBD or hemp derived consumable products, at some point, if you go low enough, you might you might have unintended consequences affecting a store that's not really focused on this."

Cole confirmed, "But we could go with the planning board recommendations." The attorney confirmed it was in their discretion.

Councilman Tyler Bowles asked, "When and when you say hemp-derived consumable, is that consumable, is that ingestible, or is that lotion?" The attorney confirmed it would include both.

Bowles then asked about T-shirts made of hemp, which were confirmed not to be consumable. Bowles joked, "Never know now."

The mayor noted that the ordinance included a 1,000-foot distance requirement from other such stores, as well as from daycares, parks, and churches. This was confirmed to be on page 58 of the document.

Several council members expressed support for the planning board's recommendation of 15 percent.

Motion: Councilman Bowles moved "to approve ordinance 2025-13 with the recommendation of the planning board, with the recommendations set by the planning board at the percentage of 15 percent." Councilman Lane seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

The attorney then noted, "Part of the board's text message is consistent with the comprehensive plan." After clarification that this needed to be included in the motion:

Amended Motion: Councilman Tyler Bowles amended his motion to "approve ordinance 2025-13 and agree that the proposed amendment is in keeping with the spirit of our comp plan." Councilman Lane seconded the amended motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0. ****SEE DOCUMENT 2****

5. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The mayor asked the council whether they had any questions or concerns about the departmental reports they would like to address. There were none.

The Council acknowledged receipt of all departmental reports.

MOTION: Motion to acknowledge receipt of the departmental reports: Moved by Councilwoman Fowler, Mayor Pro Tem Cole seconded. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

ITEMS OF GENERAL CONCERN

Councilwoman Fowler stated we need to encourage people to take the survey the city has posted about downtown and what they want to see, because I've seen a lot of people complaining on social media. But if they would just take that survey and encourage others to take the survey, and they can express themselves through that, that would be great."

Councilman Lane clarified about the survey: "Sorry. I just want to clarify the survey Councilwoman mentioned. That is something that we are doing alongside the Department of Commerce for our state, as well as the Downtown King partnership. And that's really being done by the state to collect information that will be shared with us as we prioritize what we want to do in our downtown. We want to hear from our citizens."

Lane provided additional details about it being given with the Department of Commerce and Downtown King partnership to help prioritize downtown improvements and assist with future grant applications.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Councilwoman Fowler made a motion to adjourn at 6:55 PM. Councilman Lane seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

***** Clerk's Note: See Document 1-2 for supporting documents. *****

Attest:

Approved by:

Nicole Branshaw, City Clerk

Richard E. McCraw, Mayor



Date: January 5, 2026

PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN-UP SHEET

All persons who wish to speak MUST sign up for the Public Comment period unless you wish to speak during a public hearing, in which case you must sign up for the Public Hearing. ALL SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES.

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

| | <u>NAME</u> | <u>ORGANIZATION (If Any)</u> | <u>ADDRESS</u> | <u>PHONE</u> | <u>SUBJECT</u> | <u>City Resident?</u> |
|-----|-------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--|
| 1. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
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| 12. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 13. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |

In many cases, the City Council will receive your comments but take no action at the meeting.

A staff member will contact you to follow up on your concerns.