



## **REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**JUNE 2, 2025 – 6:00 PM**

**1843 BRISTOW DRIVE**

**UNION, KY 41091**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Solomon called the Regular Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Solomon led all attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **ROLL CALL**

A quorum was present, and a roll call was taken. Mayor Larry Solomon, Commissioner John Mefford, Commissioner Doug Bine, Commissioner George Eldridge, and Commissioner Kimberly Tuyn.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Solomon asked for approval of May 5, 2025, Regular Commission Meeting minutes. Commissioner Eldridge made a motion and Commissioner Tuyn seconded that motion.

**Motion approved 5-0**

Mayor Solomon asked for approval of May 7, 2025, Special Meeting minutes. Commissioner Bine made a motion and Commissioner Mefford seconded that motion.

The Special Meeting on May 7, 2025, only had one agenda item to review the construction and design of Union Town Square. Commission Mefford was not in attendance at that meeting and requested the minutes for June 2, 2025, reflect that he was briefed by Public Works Director Paul Kremer and City Administrator Amy Safran on the project.

**Motion approved 5-0**

Mayor Solomon asked for approval of May 19, 2025, Caucus Meeting minutes.

Commissioner Tuyn made a motion and Commissioner Eldridge seconded that motion.

**Motion approved 5-0**

### **MAYOR/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Mayor Solomon mentioned the city will be receiving the packet for Allora Wedding Event

Center from Boone County Planning Commission on June 5, 2025. He asked the Commissioners to review the packet in preparation for discussion at the June 16, 2025, Caucus meeting.

### Pocket Parks

Mayor Solomon mentioned pocket parks have been a recent topic of discussion on social media, and he wanted to give clarification on them. He explained there were five parcels of land that the state deemed too small to build a home on and decided to give the parcels to the city to use. One request received most often by residents is the need for more green space in the city. The former Commission decided to turn six parcels of land owned by the city, including the five donated by the state into pocket parks. The purpose of the pocket parks is to give people who are walking on Mt. Zion Road a place to stop and rest. There will be no events held at the properties therefore there is no need for parking. Funding for the pocket parks will come from city growth funds, which is funded by the payroll tax.

Mayor Solomon thanked Public Works Director Paul Kremer for all the hard work he has put into the development of the pocket parks.

### Masonic Lodge Cornerstone

Commissioner Bine addressed a vote that took place during May 19, 2025, Caucus meeting for a request from the Union Masonic Lodge to hold a cornerstone laying consecration ritual for the new city building. Commissioner Bine was not in attendance at that meeting. He expressed his concerns about the ritual.

- The legal neutrality stating that free Masonry although not a religion includes religious overtones and spiritual elements that may conflict with the principal of government neutrality towards religion.
- There is also a question of constitutional concern.
- The establishment clause of the first amendment could be cited to argue allowing a Masonic ritual on public property constitutes city endorsement of a religious or quasar religious group.
- The Masonic organization is often viewed as secretive or exclusive which may conflict with the value of open and inclusive governments.
- Some residents might feel that the ritual is favoring a private group that they could not join or fully understand, this could cause public discomfort or mistrust.
- There is a question of equal access for this organization since they do not accept female members.

Commissioner Bine feels that if the Masonic Lodge is allowed to conduct this ceremonial ritual the city may then be legally or ethically obligated to allow other groups including those controversial or fringe organizations to perform a similar ritual. There should be focus on functionality and not symbolism, the city building is civic structure meant to serve all citizens impartially. Imbedding rituals from one private group regardless of tradition might conflict with that principle. Commissioner Bine acknowledged the Masonic Lodge as a respected partner in the community but feels the Union Commission needs to draw the line at this and future

ceremony request. Commissioner Bine made a motion to reconsider the vote from May 19, 2025, Caucus meeting allowing the Union Masonic Lodge to perform a cornerstone laying ritual at the new Union City Building. Commissioner Mefford seconded the motion.

Commissioner Eldridge stated the Masonic Lodge has been a good partner to the city. He is not aware of them being a religious organization, only that they believe you need to believe in a higher power to be a member. Women can join Eastern Star which is the female version of the Masonic Lodge.

Commissioner Tuyn mentioned she had to educate herself about the Mason organization. At the Caucus meeting she voted to approve the cornerstone laying ritual. Her request of the Commission was that they would review any script that would be used to ensure it was appropriate and not offensive, neutral in terms of any religious affiliation. The Masonic Lodge is a part of the history of the city. Commissioner Tuyn feels that the Commission should not have an across the board standard but evaluate each request as they come to the city.

Commissioner Mefford mentioned his reason for seconding the motion was to have further discussion. He would like to further investigate the issue to ensure this will not cause a problem with the residents of Union.

Mayor Solomon mentioned he has been a Mason for thirty-five years. He stated there is an opportunity for females to participate in the Masons by joining the Eastern Star which is all part of one organization. He mentioned the Masons are a part of the community. The city should be evaluating issues as they come to us.

After discussion, there was a roll call vote to reconsider the vote from the Caucus meeting on May 19, 2025. Commissioner Tuyn voted nay, Commissioner Eldridge voted nay, Commissioner Bine voted aye, and Commissioner Mefford voted aye. Mayor Solomon abstained from his vote by leaving the room during the vote. **Motion approved 2-2**

Attorney Voss explained since there was a tie vote the previous decision stands. It would have to be a majority vote to overturn.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Commissioner John Mefford provided an update to the Commission on the month of May financial report which included “the bills to be paid” and the balance sheet. One item that stands out is a lighting repair bill for the purple lights on Mt. Zion Road. He mentioned there is only one month left in the 2024/2025 fiscal year budget and the profit and loss report showed 115 percent of revenues and only 83 percent of expenses, leaving the city in a good financial position. As discussed in a previous meeting, the overage for ice and snow removal was paid from the general fund. The interest rate remains the same as in the month of April, earning \$13,000 for a total in the fiscal year of \$155,000.

Mayor Solomon mentioned there will be a first reading of Ordinance 2025-07 which adopts the amended budget to reflect the overage for the snow and ice removal came out of the general fund.

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve the financial report that includes the monthly bills, and the profit and loss versus actual report for the month of May.

Commissioner Bine made a motion and Commissioner Eldridge seconded the motion. **Motion approved 5-0**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Commissioner Tuyn mentioned the next City of Union business mixer will be on August 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM hosted by 19Nineteen Apartments in Union Promenade.

She explained there was a concept plan change application submitted to Boone County Planning Commission (BCPC) to change the parking seating ratio at Union Promenade from one to two to one to three. Because most buildings will have restaurants there is a need for extra parking. There will be a parking arrangement with the developer and Cincinnati Children's for approximately nine months allowing use of their parking lot after 6:00 PM. Commissioner Tuyn mentioned there will be an update on the Union Promenade at the Caucus meeting on June 16, 2025.

City Administrator (CAO) Amy Safran mentioned there will be a ribbon cutting on June 14, 2025, for Ace of Fades Barbershop in the Union Promenade.

### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Commissioner Bine mentioned the round-a-bout on Hathaway Road has been completed. He explained the bid for plants at the round-a-bout on Mt. Zion came in higher than expected. Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) would need to approve a new design with fewer plants and because of time constraints the decision has been made to complete the project later.

Pocket Park one is nearing completion. All the concrete pathways are complete, most of the trees are planted. The park will be complete after mulching, plants, three benches, and a trash bin are installed.

CAO Safran mentioned that the city purchased two of the benches using funds from a Duke Energy Foundation grant.

The Public Works Director (PWD) Paul Kremer mentioned the city has informed residents living near the pocket park on Sycamore Drive and Mt. Zion Road by sending two separate letters.

The Union Town Square construction bid will be published in the Cincinnati Enquirer on June 3, and June 10. The pre-bid conference will be on June 17, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the Union Fire Station.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Commissioner Eldridge mentioned Union Celebrates America will be on June 27, 2025, the parade starts at 6:00 PM, the event will begin immediately after. There will be twelve food vendors, seven community partner vendors, and the band DV8 will be performing. The Boone County Parks Department will provide games and assist with clean-up.

CAO Safran mentioned the City of Union will have an article in the next publication of What's Happening to be issued in August.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

CAO Safran mentioned the city is working with the website developer to create a page to include information on parks in the city. This page will include updates, locations, and pictures.

The Commission approved three pocket park signs to be installed at a previous meeting. The signs will be scheduled for installation when the parks are completed.

Seven resumes have been received from the recent advertisement for a part-time assistant city clerk. Once all interviews have been completed a recommendation will be made to the Commission.

CAO Safran mentioned she has been working with the City Treasurer Christy Everman and accountant Ben Harrison to amend the FY24/25 budget.

#### **LEGISLATION/ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

##### *Municipal Orders*

##### **MUNICIPAL ORDER NO. 2025-30 A MUNICIPAL ORDER OF THE CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY, REAPPOINTING TERRILL L. KIDWELL TO THE CITY OF UNION BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

Commissioner Mefford made a motion and Commissioner Bine seconded the motion.

**Motion approved 5-0**

Mayor Solomon issued the Oath of Office to Terrill L. Kidwell.

##### **MUNICIPAL ORDER NO. 2025-31 A MUNICIPAL ORDER APPOINTING TERESA ROBINSON TO SERVE ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF THE CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY**



Commissioner Tuyn made a motion and Commissioner Eldridge seconded the motion.

**Motion approved 5-0**

Mayor Solomon issued the Oath of Office to Teresa Robinson.

**MUNICIPAL ORDER NO. 2025-32 A MUNICIPAL ORDER ACCEPTING THE CONTRACT OF EVERETTE "JUNIOR" PARTIN FOR GRAVE DIGGING SERVICES FOR UNION RICE CEMETERY IN THE CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY**

Commissioner Tuyn made a motion and Commissioner Eldridge seconded the motion.

**Motion approved 5-0**

**Ordinances**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2025-07 AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN AMENDED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2024, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025, BY ESTIMATING REVENUES AND RESOURCES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY (FIRST READING)**

**VISITORS WISHING TO SPEAK**

Representative Marianne Proctor addressed the Commission asking them to provide input during legislative sessions. She mentioned there are many items that affect the city.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

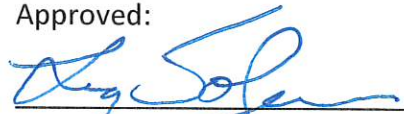
Mayor Solomon announced the Caucus Meeting will be on Monday June 16, 2025, at 6:00 PM. The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on Monday July 7, 2025, at 6:00 PM. Both meetings will be at the city building 1843 Bristow Drive Union, Kentucky.

**ADJOURNMENT**


Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mefford made a motion and Commissioner Bine seconded that motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:51 PM.

**Motion approved 5-0.**

Approved:

  
Hon. Larry Solomon, Mayor

Attest:

  
Tammy Wilhoite, City Clerk