



**CAUCUS/COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 21, 2025 – 6:00 PM
1843 BRISTOW DRIVE
UNION, KY 41091**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Solomon called the Caucus 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 George Eldridge, Commissioner Doug Bine, and Commissioner Kim Tuyn.

DISCUSSION

Allora Wedding Event Center

Mayor Solomon mentioned that at the Regular Commission Meeting on July 7, 2025, Commissioners heard from attendees for and against the Allora Wedding Event Center. He explained that all the Commissioners were asked to research and form their own decision on the zone change request. Mayor Solomon asked each Commissioner to give a statement on the development and to state what decision they have made.

Commissioner Mefford explained prior to 2022, that the property being considered for development was zoned Rural Suburban Estates. In 2022, the property was re-zoned to Suburban Residential (SR-1) so that it could be built out as a subdivision equivalent to Westbrook Subdivision. He stated he is always reserved when making changes that could affect people's lives, homes, and home values when there is a property that will be contiguous to those properties. He took all the concerns into consideration when making his decision. After hearing the developer explain how the septic system will be built, he does not feel there is a concern. Most of the weddings will be outside with receptions taking place inside so he does not feel that noise should be an issue. He has taken into consideration how the property was originally zoned and why it was being changed. He stated he represents the citizens of Union not those of unincorporated Boone County. He feels the venue will be a good business; it will

benefit the community economically. Commissioner Mefford believes it is in the best interest of the city to have the event center.

Commissioner Bine mentioned that the City of Union is growing and changing. He feels like Mr. McPherson and Mr. Rector went above and beyond to accommodate the Boone County Planning Commission (BCPC) and the neighbors close to the proposed venue regarding the septic system. Mr. McPherson addressed all the sound issues, traffic, and he plans to host community events in a way to give back to the community. Commissioner Bine thinks it is a good project that will increase property values. He mentioned the developer has committed to connecting to the sewer system when it is available. He feels the event center would be a good project for the City of Union.

Commissioner Eldridge mentioned he has read the packet from BCPC for the Allora Wedding Event Center many times and has concerns about the project, one being the septic system. Another concern he has is the number of planned events that have not been named in addition to the forty to fifty weddings planned in a year. He also has concerns about the traffic that would be incurring on Hathaway Road, which is only two lanes. He explained the city has heard from a lot of people both for and against the development and many of those were not residents of the city, they were county residents. For these reasons he is opposed to the project.

Commissioner Tuyn mentioned as the chair of the Economic Development Committee in addition to being a commissioner she is committed to seeing the city grow in a way that is thoughtful, sustainable, and consistent with the vision and guidelines established through the county comprehension planning process. She thanked everyone who gave feedback about the project. She stated many would agree that an amenity like the one being proposed would be great for Northern Kentucky but has concerns about whether the City of Union is the right location for the venue. She addressed concerns she has such as incompatible land use; the project would introduce a commercial destination approximately three quarters of a mile from US Highway 42. The residents of Union value the balance of ongoing development and maintaining the semi-rural family-oriented environment. Allowing an event center in this location could set a precedent for additional incompatible land use and potential for spot zoning. She expressed concerns about an event center operating on a septic system for potentially up to a decade. Traffic and safety are also a concern. For these reasons, the Commissioner opposes the location for the venue.

Mayor Solomon mentioned he has worked with several developers over the past ten years through the Executive Committee. His concern for the Allora Wedding Event Center is the cost to operate the venue. He conducted his own cost analysis and feels to be profitable that the venue would need an annual revenue of one million dollars to operate. He is concerned if the venue is not profitable, they would close and leave a vacant building, and there is an unknown

of what retailer could come in after. Mayor Solomon feels the business is too risky for the City of Union and not in the best interest of the city and therefore he is voting no.

Proclamation Request

City Administrator (CAO) Amy Safran explained the City of Union received a request from Peggy Kennedy; she is with the Boone County Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution. The request is for the City of Union to proclaim September 17th through September 23rd of 2025, as Constitution Week. If the Commission agrees to the request Attorney Voss will prepare the proclamation to be read and presented on August 4, 2025, at the regular commission meeting.

Mayor Solomon asked the Commission for approval of the request. All the Commissioners agreed to the request for a proclamation.

Request Policy

CAO Safran discussed three separate policies that were reviewed at the last Commission meeting. The credit card policy was approved by the Commission as written. Commissioner Mefford requested a line be added to the cell phone policy to include personal devices will be subject to open records if used to conduct city business. The Commission agreed to the policy with the added language.

The Commissioners were given two drafts for a request policy, one includes language discussed at the last Commission meeting, to designate a budget line approving a maximum of \$10,000 in monetary donations per fiscal year with up to \$500 per recipient as approved. Draft two is a policy that reads that no monetary donations are permitted.

CAO Safran mentioned she was asked to inquire about how other cities manage requests for monetary donations. She consulted with the city's accountant Ben Harrison, and he strongly recommended against passing legislation that would allow monetary donations. Taking taxpayer dollars and giving it to other organizations is not viewed as good practice and he does not see that happening with other municipalities that he works with. Mr. Harrison told CAO Safran that he recommended a policy that would not permit monetary donations.

CAO Safran asked the Commissioners to discuss both policies before deciding which policy draft to approve.

Commissioner Bine explained it is taxpayer money, and the Commissioners are stewards charged with proof of spending that benefits the taxpayers and the city. He does not feel it is a good look for the city to give money away to groups and organizations and then in turn seek donations from different sponsors for city events. He also feels it will open the door for a lot of groups seeking donations. He mentioned the city does not have staff to oversee how donation money would be spent. He stated it is bad public policy, and he is strongly opposed.

Commissioner Mefford also stated it is not the city's money; it belongs to the taxpayers. He does not think the city should give away money then increase a tax or implement a new tax. He explained the city implemented the recent payroll tax to pay for Union Town Square Park and new city building. He is opposed to giving monetary donations.

Commissioner Eldridge is also opposed to giving monetary donations. He does not think the city should give away taxpayers' money.

Commissioner Tuyn agreed with everything that was said by the other Commissioners. The professional input of Ben Harrison was particularly important to her. She agreed to Request draft number two that does not allow monetary donations to be given by the city.

Mayor Solomon also agrees to Request number two not allowing monetary donations to be given by the city.

Union Town Square Bid Results

CAO Safran gave a brief history of how the Union Town Square project started. She explained it has been a long-time vision of the city to have a town center, a central gathering place. As the City of Union continues to experience substantial growth the initial vision for the mixed-use plan transformed to a focus on green space, an event lawn, park amenities, and a larger city building. In June of 2022, the city purchased twenty-two acres on the corner of US Highway 42 and Brillance Avenue. After the land acquisition the city hired MKSK to update the design and later the following year they developed a conceptual masterplan. Part of the development included public input, to find out what the residents wanted. In November of 2023, the city formed a park advisory committee consisting of eight Union residents from different areas of the city. The city conducted a public survey, that along with the park committee helped the City Commission identify initial priorities as well as a new name Union Town Square. In addition to the plan for a park and green space, a need was identified for a larger new city building to accommodate a growing city with current and future staff. The Commission toured multiple city/county buildings and interviewed multiple architectural and engineering firms before choosing a unique city design by Summit Architect + Engineering in April of 2024. The city moved forward with the project as one combining the park design and city building as one project. A second public survey was conducted in June 2024 at Union Celebrates America event.

Public Works Director (PWD) Paul Kremer explained after regular meetings with CAO Safran and Summit Architects + Engineers they were able to produce a design for the new city building. In May 2025, the Union Town Square construction documents were presented to the City Commission prior to being published for bid. PWD Kremer mentioned the recommendation is to hire Mark Spaulding Construction Company with alternate three water loop.

Sean Matthews, Senior Architect with Summit Architects + Engineers, gave a review of the bid process. He explained there was a lot of interest in the project, and four bids were received. Summit Architects + Engineers checked references with the two lowest bidders and they both had excellent references. They feel confident that Mark Spaulding Construction Company will do an excellent job and the city will be happy working with them.

Teresa Harget Brooks, Design and Construction Project Manager with Summit Architects + Engineers, explained that an extensive amount of research was conducted on all the bidders. They contacted references provided by the contractors, viewed websites, and they feel confident that Mark Spaulding Construction will do an excellent job.

Jack McGlasson, Senior Associate Landscape Architect at MKSK, explained there are four add-on alternates for the park included in the bid, additive to the base bid. They consist of the following.

- Add Alternate Number 1 – make outer trail complete asphalt.
- Add Alternate Number 2 - include one to four open-air shelters around the oval.
- Add Alternate Number 3 - water hoop feature in splash pad area.
- Add Alternate Number 4 – add crushed gravel for a future maintenance yard/building.

PWD Kremer mentioned he and CAO Safran met with the Mark Spaulding Construction Company on Friday July 18, 2025. He said they have great references; they are a local company from Boone County and have completed several projects in Boone County. He explained there are two separate contracts prepared, one with just the base bid of \$13,6000.00 and one with alternate number three added in. He explained if there is a vote from the Commission to move forward the contract will be signed by Mark Spaulding Construction Company and there will be an issue to proceed over the next few days. The city plans to give Kentucky Fish and Wildlife forty-eight hours to respond before moving forward with the tree removal on the property.

The Commission discussed including the add-on alternates to the bid. After discussion they decided to include all four add-on alternates, add-on alternate number two will only include two shelters.

Attorney Donnie Warner, with Frost Brown Todd, discussed two pieces of legislation related to the general obligation bonds. He mentioned one piece is the Ordinance requiring two readings that authorizes the issuance and sale of the bonds and the process of working with RSA Advisors to put the bonds out for bid, receiving the bids and going through with the sale of the bonds once the prevailing bid is received. The second piece of legislation is a Municipal Order that only requires one reading. This will allow the Mayor to start advertising the bond sale working with RSA Advisors and Frost Brown Todd on the offering document that will advertise the city's credit, secure a credit rating and do all the interim items that need to be completed before the second reading of the Ordinance. Once the Ordinance is passed the process to proceed with the sale of the bonds can take place.

Attorney Warner explained they are recommending the dollar amount not to exceed in the legislation be amended to \$20,000,000 from the current dollar amount of \$19,000,000 based on the updated contingency and the add-on alternates. This will give a buffer so when the bonds are sold there will be proceeds to cover these additional alternates and the contingency that came in the final construction contract.

Bryan Skinner, Vice President of RSA Advisors, mentioned before the second reading of Ordinance 2025-08 there would be a much better estimate of where the soft cost would be.

Mayor Solomon thanked CAO Safran and PWD Kremer for all their hard work and effort that was put into the Union Town Square project over the past few years, it is greatly appreciated.

He mentioned it is important for the city to get everything correct. He stated that staff and the team at Summit Architects + Engineers have done just that to get us to where we are today.

LEGISLATION/ATTORNEY'S REPORT

MUNICIPAL ORDERS

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-36 A MUNICIPAL ORDER FOR CITY OF UNION SETTING POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR CELL PHONE USE BY COMMISSION MEMBERS AND ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES FOR PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING CITY BUSINESS VIA PHONE OR TEXT.

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-36. Commissioner Tuyn made a motion and Commissioner Eldridge seconded the motion. **Motion approved 5-0**

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-37 A MUNICIPAL ORDER FOR THE CITY OF UNION TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF CITY CREDIT CARDS.

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-37. Commissioner Mefford made a motion and Commissioner Bine seconded the motion. **Motion approved 5-0**

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-38 – A MUNICIPAL ORDER FOR THE CITY OF UNION ALLOWING IN-KIND DONATIONS.

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-38. Commissioner Bine made a motion and Commissioner Mefford seconded that motion. **Motion approved 5-0**

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-39 A MUNICIPAL ORDER ACCEPTING THE BID OF MARK SPAULDING CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR THE UNION TOWN SQUARE PARK AND CITY BUILDING FOR THE CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO THE CONTRACT WITH MARK SPAULDING CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN SUPPORT OF SAID BID. Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-39 to include add-on alternates Number one through Number four as discussed.

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

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-40 A MUNICIPAL ORDER FOR THE CITY OF UNION FOR THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE PROPOSAL FROM UES FOR SPECIAL TESTING OF THE UNION TOWN SQUARE PROPERTY. Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-40.

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

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-41 MUNICIPAL ORDER APPROVING THE ADVERTISEMENT FOR BID AND DISTRIBUTION OF A PRELIMINARY OFFICIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY GENERAL OBLIGATION PUBLIC PROJECT AND REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2025 IN THE APPROXIMATE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000,000.

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-40 as agreed upon by the Commission for the aggregate principal amount to be amended not to exceed \$20,000,000.

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

MUNICIPAL ORDER 2025-42 AN ORDER DENYING A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FROM SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ONE (SR-1) TO SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ONE / PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (SR-1 / PD) FOR AN APPROXIMATE 18.8 ACRE AREA LOCATED ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF HATHAWAY ROAD, BETWEEN OLD UNION ROAD AND HAVING A PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIDN) OF 052.00-00-028.03, AND A CHANGE IN CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN A SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ONE (SR-1) DISTRICT FOR AN APPROXIMATE 81 ACREA AREA LOCATED ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF HATHAWAY ROAD, BETWEEN OLD UNION ROAD AND SPRUCE LANE, APPROXIMATELY 2,400 FEET EAST OF SRUCE LANE, BEING DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM MEIMAN ROAD AND 00.28.03, TO ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROXIMATE 13,000 SQUARE FOOT EVENT CENTER, WITH ASSOCIATED FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES, AND TO AMEND THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION. Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to approve Municipal Order 2025-42. Commissioner Eldridge made a motion and Commissioner Tuyn seconded that motion. Commissioner Mefford voted nay, Commissioner Bine voted nay, Commissioner Eldridge voted yes, Commissioner Tuyn voted yes, and Mayor Solomon voted yes. **Motion approved 3-2**

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-08 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION PUBLIC PROJECT AND REFUNDING BONDS IN AN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$20,000,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF (I) REFUNDING THE CITY'S OUTSTANDING CITY OF UNION, KENTUCKY GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES, SERIES 2022, THE PROCEEDS OF WHICH WERE USED TO ACQUIRE REAL ESTATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW CITY BUILDING; AND (II) PAYING OR REIMBURSING THE COSTS OF ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING AND EQUIPPING A NEW CITY BUILDING AND RELATED APPURTENANCES AND IMPROVEMENTS; APPROVING THE FORM OF THE SERIES 2025 BONDS; AUTHORIZING DESIGNATED OFFICERS TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER THE SERIES 2025 BONDS; PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT AND SECURITY OF THE SERIES 2025 BONDS; CREATING A BOND PAYMENT FUND; MAINTAINING A SINKING FUND; AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE BID OF THE BOND PURCHASER FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE SERIES 2025 BONDS AND AUTHORIZING THE COMPETITIVE SALE OF THE SERIES 2025 BONDS; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF CERTIFICATES NECESSARY OR REQUIRED FOR THE ISSUANCE OF THE BONDS; AND REPEALING INCONSISTENT ORDINANCES. (FIRST READING)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Solomon announced there will be a Regular Commission meeting Monday August 4, 2025, at 6:00 PM. Mayor Solomon also stated the next Caucus/Commission meeting will be held on Monday August 18, 2025, at 6:00 PM; both meetings will be at the city building 1843 Bristow Drive Union, Kentucky.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to enter executive session at 7:35 PM citing reason **KRS 61.810 (b)** Deliberations on the future acquisition or sale of real property by a public agency, but only when publicity would be likely to affect the value of a specific piece of property to be acquired for public use or sold by a public agency.

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

Motion approved 5-0

Commissioner Eldridge made a motion at 8:09 PM to exit executive session and Commissioner Mefford seconded that motion. **Motion approved 5-0**

Mayor Solomon stated no decisions were made during executive session.

ADJOURN

Mayor Solomon asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Bine made a motion, and Commissioner Mefford seconded that motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Motion approved 5-0

Approved:


Hon. Larry Solomon, Mayor

Attest:


Tammy Wilhoite, City Clerk