



CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 28, 2025 AT 4:30 PM
FINLAYSON CITY HALL

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Mayor Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **ROLL CALL:**
 - a. Council members present: Dave Auchter, Barb Morgan, Kim Schaefer, Jeff Flaws, Rhonda Kriesel
 - b. Council members absent: None
 - c. Others present: Cary Steeg (Resident), Greg Sorenson (Comm. Club, Friends of Historic Finlayson), Nancy & Dennis Liebelt (Residents)
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *Motion by Auchter to approve the agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*
4. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - a. Resolution #2025-19 – Acceptance of Donation from Finlayson Community Club: *Morgan made a motion to accept the resolution.* Discussion was held regarding the use of the word “fundraiser” in the resolution. Mayor Auchter noted that removal was not necessary, as the donation is from the Community Club, which is not restricted from fundraising like the City. *All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - b. Resolution #2025-20 – Assignment of Franchise: Morgan asked if the existing agreement for “free service” would continue. Mayor Auchter clarified that the assignment preserves the terms of the existing franchise agreement. *Motion by Morgan to accept the resolution. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - c. Minor Subdivision – Pogatchnik: *Flaws made a motion to approve the minor subdivision.* Schaefer asked whether Auchter and Flaws attending Planning & Zoning meetings presented a conflict of interest. Auchter clarified he is not on the Planning & Zoning Commission, and Flaws is the appointed Council liaison. No conflict was identified. *All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - d. Minor Subdivision – Split Rock / Ternes: *Motion by Flaws to approve the minor subdivision. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - e. Blight at 6485 Front Street: Zoning Administrator Melzark responded to a call regarding a potential chicken ordinance violation. Upon inspection, the property was found to be in compliance with City regulations regarding poultry. However, during the site visit, Melzark observed that the dwelling appeared to be in poor structural condition, with concerns for general habitability and resident well-being. He brought the matter to the Council's attention out of concern for potential health and safety issues. *Motion by Schaefer to authorize Zoning Administrator Ed Melzark to contact Pine County to request a welfare check at the 6485 Front Street residence. Motion was amended by consensus to reference the property address rather than the resident name, in order to protect privacy. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - f. Department Liaisons: Schaefer inquired about the purpose of department liaisons. Mayor Auchter noted that liaison roles were standard practice prior to 2025, intended to provide council accountability alongside ongoing administrative support. Flaws disclosed that he is a neighbor to the Bar Manager. Morgan disclosed her spouse is a member of the Fire Department. No conflict of interest was identified. Liaison appointments:
 - i. Flaws – Liquor Store & Bar Manager
 - ii. Morgan – Fire Department & Fire Chief
 - iii. Schaefer – Public Works & Maintenance
 - iv. Kriesel – City Clerk*Motion by Flaws to appoint Council liaisons as identified. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - g. Department Reviews: Schaefer and Morgan have researched performance review methods and will forward information to the Clerk to distribute to the Council.

Schaefer asked if the Fire Chief should be reviewed. Mayor Auchter stated that as a City employee (volunteer), the Fire Chief should receive a review, and that he may conduct internal reviews of Fire Department members. A stipend for the Fire Chief was discussed. Schaefer expressed concern about legality and potential division. No action taken. Schaefer also presented data regarding Employee Handbook revisions, including paid time off (Holiday, Vacation/PTO, ESST). Mayor Auchter requested the Personnel Committee submit a recommendation prior to the next meeting and asked that Council members send materials through the Clerk. Schaefer shared information on upcoming 2026 Paid Family & Medical Leave requirements. *Motion by Auchter to defer development of policy and procedure for department head reviews to the Personnel Committee and to bring a recommendation to the Council at the next meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.*

- h. Liquor Store Analysis: Morgan proposed contracting Al Brigan to assess liquor store operations at \$30/hour. The Council agreed that a budget was not necessary for the scope of this analysis. Morgan will contact Al and inform the Mayor or Clerk if he is unavailable so the item can be added to a future agenda. [Note: This decision was not presented with a motion.] Loss prevention was discussed. *Motion by Schaefer to adjust security cameras at the liquor store and bar. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- i. Bylaw Amendment: *Motion by Auchter to establish an ad hoc committee to review the bylaws and bring a recommendation to the August meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.* Flaws and Morgan volunteered to serve. *Motion by Auchter to appoint Flaws and Morgan to the ad hoc Bylaw Committee. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- j. Complaint Policy & Procedure: Discussion was held on the draft policy. The following amendments were suggested:
 - i. Add "Call 911" under Emergency priority level if an immediate threat to health or safety is identified.
 - ii. Replace "complaints" with "concerns" under Low priority level.
 - iii. Clarify that complaints may not be anonymous unless protected under federal, state, or local law (e.g., civil rights, data privacy).

Motion by Auchter to approve the policy with the above amendments. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. **ADJOURNMENT:** *Motion by Auchter to adjourn the regular Council meeting at 5:42 PM.*

Schaefer asked about how policies and agenda items are formed. Morgan asked how unaddressed agenda items are handled. Mayor Auchter clarified that unresolved items remain under "Unfinished Business." No action taken. Schaefer suggested avoiding effective dates on draft policies until final approval. No action taken. *Motion by Flaws to adjourn the special Council meeting at 5:48 PM. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Submitted by Liz Bernhardt, City Clerk, July 28, 2025