

SANFORD CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

West End Conference Room

225 East Weatherspoon Street, Sanford, NC

The City Council held a work session on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. in the West End Conference Room at City Hall. The following people were present:

Mayor Rebecca Wyhof Salmon
Council Member Mark Akinosho
Council Member Christopher Petty
Council Member Charles Taylor
City Attorney Susan Patterson
Deputy City Clerk Vicki Cannady

Mayor Pro Tem Byron Buckels
Council Member Jean Dabbs
Council Member Linda Rhodes
City Manager Hal Hegwer
City Clerk Bonnie Bryant

Absent:

Council Member Walter Ferguson

Call to Order

Mayor Salmon called the meeting to order.

Vermillion by Mattamy Homes Development Agreement (Exhibit A)

Nick Fortune, Director of Business Management for TriRiver Water, reviewed the Mattamy Homes, LLC, Development agreement and explained that Little Buffalo Interceptor has available capacity to serve the existing basin but the Mattamy Homes Development is not located within this basin and adding the development to the area served by Little Buffalo Interceptor will impact its available sanitary sewage discharge capacity. The City of Sanford intends to make the sewer improvements to increase the available sanitary sewer discharge capacity to serve an additional 4,870 homes, installing approximately 6,900 linear feet of 24-inch sewer facilities to serve tributary basins including this development. The developer will be obligated to pay their proportionate share for the upgrades upfront, which is \$1.6 million. The consensus of Council was favorable to move forward with this project and the process of notification of neighboring properties. Council Member Taylor asked who would be responsible should there be expense overages of the estimated development fee. Executive Director of Utilities Paul Weeks explained that staff uses conservative engineer estimates to determine the fair share of development fees and he acknowledged that should there be an overage or less than the amount of the determined development fee, the City of Sanford would not charge the developer for the overage, nor would the developer be refunded for any amount under the estimated development fee.

Update on Lead Service Line Project (Exhibit B)

Nick Fortune, Director of Business Management for TriRiver Water, reviewed the TriRiver Water Lead Service Line Project that has been active for approximately one year. The project was started with a desktop study, reviewing historical records to determine lead service line information. Staff actually dug up a few service lines and combined this information with the desktop study, which is a statistical analysis for a model, which is determined by the state to statistically categorize service lines. Throughout this process, TriRiver Water eliminated approximately 20,628 service lines that were identified through the desktop study; 335 service lines were identified via field investigations and 1,704 were identified via statistical analysis. Through this process, which was set by the state, staff determined that the City of Sanford service lines do not contain any lead. This inventory was submitted to the State for review and they also consider the process by which this information was obtained, and we were approved. This approval allowed the City of Sanford to issue a standard statement set by the program,

that “*With 95-percent confidence, we can conclude that we have fewer than one-percent of service lines containing lead.*” Over the next few weeks, this statement will be communicated and posted throughout all communication avenues for TriRiver Water. Staff actually dug up 335 out of more than 20,000 water lines for lead determination; however, we can definitively state that our model complies with the standard set forth by the State. Council Member Taylor raised the question of possible lawsuits to the City of Sanford because the review standard is 95-percent instead of 100-percent. Attorney Susan Patterson responded that it was possible to perhaps draft language to address this issue; however, the normal lead sampling standard set by the State of North Carolina is the same across the United States. It is mandated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and administered by the State of North Carolina for the entire state. The City of Sanford submits our statistical analysis to the State for approval or denial. The consensus of Council was that the City of Sanford statement should include language that the result of our findings was reached using the State mandated analysis requirements. Mr. Fortune noted that the City is transparent with our State Lead Line information on the City’s website. He added that staff will research the City’s statement requirements and keep Council informed of their findings before the statement is published. Mr. Fortune explained that this is an approximate thirteen-year project and it consists of the TriRiver Water Sanford System. Siler City, Pittsboro and Chatham County have their own Lead Line Project, independent of Sanford. Between 2027 and 2037, this project will verify that no lead is found and there are approximately 340 lines that must be dug up for review. The way the program is laid out, staff would test 10-percent of the lines per year for ten years. Staff is trying to complete this project as soon as possible. It is estimated that the cost to complete the project will be approximately \$150,000. Although we have some funds left in the original grant, we do not have the required funding to complete the project; therefore, staff will be applying for a new grant (60-percent grant with 40-percent forgiven). Staff will keep Council informed of the status of the application and/or new proposals. The consensus of Council was favorable to expedite the completion of the project. Mr. Fortune explained that staff will present the next lead sampling steps in a few months. Although they do not yet have all the information, he expects changes to include more stringent lead testing for daycares and schools. Staff will keep Council informed of the testing process moving forward.

Consider Joining NC WaterWARN

Nick Fortune, Director of Business Management for TriRiver Water, gave an overview of utility business, and the responsibilities of Tri-River Water Public Information Officer Cameron Clinard, which involves communication and coordination of meetings. Mr. Clinard is working on an app for TriRiver Water to enhance our customer service. As a part of TriRiver Water communication plan, Mr. Clinard has reached out to schools to schedule tours of TriRiver Water facilities, as well as working to schedule staff visits to our schools to educate students on TriRiver Water, which involves a lot of communication efforts to reach different audiences. Communications include GIS involvements, purchasing, regional projects, development agreements, partnership agreements, and asset management through VueWorks (maintenance/work order program for better decision making). Through the City’s merger with Chatham County, a purchasing position was created, They also oversee partnership agreements with interlocals. Mr. Fortune introduced TriRiverWater Management Analyst Claire Hepburn, who oversees TriRiver Water Management Program.

Tri-River Water Public Information Officer Cameron Clinard explained that he has been considering an emergency response plan, including preparation and communication plans. During this process, he discovered NC WaterWARN (Water Agency Response Network). NC WaterWARN is the mutual aid and assistant program for water and wastewater utilities in North Carolina. At present, there are approximately 115 utilities that are a part of this program, which include OWASA, Durham, and Raleigh. In the event of an emergency, affected utilities provide a list of resources that are needed

(crews, equipment, etc.) and submits it to NC WaterWARN. Other utilities that were not affected by the emergency, submit a record of resources that they have available to loan out. NC WaterWARN connects this information to be used for their response to emergencies. Utilities that receive assistance or resources provided by NC WaterWarn are responsible for those resources for the time they are used for the emergency. When the emergency has been resolved, the resources are returned to the utility that provided them. The utility with the emergency has 180 days to reimburse the utility providing the resources, which is the only monetary component in belonging to this organization; there are no annual fees, etc. and utilities only pay for what they use. The benefits for belonging to the program is rapid access to specialized personnel and equipment; assistance to quickly restore compromised or interrupted drinking water and wastewater services, assist with making utilities more resilient, and it resolves emergencies more efficiently than they would have been otherwise. TriRiver Water is growing into a regional provider and by joining this group, we would be strengthening the State's Emergency Response network. TriRiver Water would be there to assist our neighbors in emergencies, and them likewise for TriRiver Water. To join NC WaterWARN all that is necessary is to submit the completed and properly signed Mutual Aid agreement. The City Council gave consensus for TriRiver Water to become a member of NC WaterWARN.

Presentation of Communication Materials – TriRiver Water

Cameron Clinard, Tri-River Water Public Information Officer, reviewed Tri/River Water the "Behind the Tap" booklet, which is designed to be used as a communication tool to strengthen branding in workforce development, as described in (Exhibit B for the Lead Service Line Project). This booklet is a summary of the functions of TriRiver Water. Mr. Clinard saw an opportunity to reach middle and high schoolers with the booklet and to those pondering careers. He has visited schools and talked with curriculum leaders regarding the career opportunities offered by TriRiver Water and the booklet will be distributed soon to assist in gaining workforce interest in becoming a member of the City of Sanford TriRiver Water staff.

A 10-minute break was taken at 1:45 p.m., reconvened at 1:55 p.m.

Discussion of TDA's (Tourism Development Authority) Use of Depot Building

Public Works Director Fedd Walker announced that we are very near completion of the Depot Building renovation project. Mayor Salmon informed Council that she has had conversations with Tourism Development Authority Executive Director Wendy Bryan regarding operating a Welcome Center in the renovated Depot Building. She also asked for permission to move forward with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TDA.

Wendy Bryan explained that when TDA was located at Depot previously, they did operate with locked doors because they did not have sufficient staffing to be open to the public full time; however, they are now fully staffed and the door would remain unlocked. The question was asked if TDA would consider operating on Saturday and Ms. Bryan offered that she would consider anything that worked, if it would be in accordance with the budget. The consensus of Council was to allow TDA to operate a Welcome Center in the Depot Building and to proceed with the MOU for TDA. Mayor Pro Tem Buckels made note that he would like to have former Council Member Jimmy Haire recognized in the Depot Building for all his contributions.

Discussion of Community Garden

City Manager Hal Hegwer reminded Council of their January 6, 2026, City Council Meeting discussion regarding a Memorandum of Understanding between Lee County, North Carolina

Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and the City of Sanford about the roundabout project at Carthage and Wicker. NCDOT has a need for an easement for a right-of-way on Carthage Street. As part of that agreement, there is a need to replace this property. To accomplish this, Lee County needed to find other property to replace the property taken for the easement. Mr. Hegwer noted that Council's decision to table this discussion included a contingency of a one-year lease with a two-year option. This decision was so Lee County would agree to have a community garden in place and allow them an option for the next two years. Since this meeting, Mr. Hegwer has had conversations regarding the fact that the community garden has been in place for a long time and there has been a great relationship with Brick Capital. The City has maintained this property for many years, providing water and electricity and upkeep of the grounds, on a bi-weekly schedule. Mr. Hegwer noted that each Council Member was e-mailed a copy of appraisals of the four parcels located on Hudson Avenue that the City is offering for replacement of the property taken by NCDOT for the easement at the roundabout. Mr. Hegwer did get an agreement from Lee County that they would adhere to a one-year lease with Brick Capital. Mayor Pro Tem Buckels voiced concern that Lee County is being compensated \$84,000 by NCDOT for the easement they are taking for the roundabout, as well as receiving the City of Sanford's donated property; however, he does not want to interfere with NCDOT's progress of the roundabout. Mr. Buckels added that he wants to make sure those who have helped with the garden are supported; Brick Capital Executive Director Kerry Bashaw mentioned that he has spoken with Lee County's Attorney this morning and was assured Lee County would provide an annual lease with Brick Capital.

The consensus of Council was that they would like to keep one of the parcels on Hudson Avenue; however, they were also in agreement that they do not want to make any decision that would impede the progress of the NCDOT roundabout. City Manager Hegwer is to contact NCDOT and State Park officials to obtain information and report back to Council.

Demolition of Structure located at 1503 Old Carbonton Road (Exhibit C)

Public Works Director Fedd Walker presented a slide presentation of the condition of the structure located at 1503 Old Carbonton Road as shown in (Exhibit C) and explained that the structure is in a state of disrepair and unfit for human habitation. He mentioned that there is also mold and asbestos in the structure that will have to be removed at a cost of \$3,800; the demolition cost is \$27,000, which includes leveling and reseeding of the land. The total cost for the demolition and asbestos removal is \$30,800. Mr. Walker noted that this property is boarded-up; however, Council Member Taylor suggested posting a condemnation notice on the structure. The consensus of Council was to proceed with the demolition of the structure.

Other

There was no other business.

Closed Session

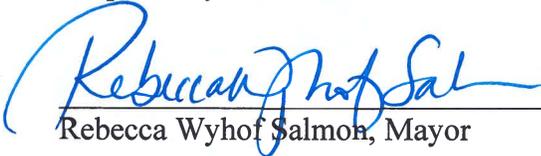
Council Member Rhodes made a motion to go into closed session in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1), to prevent disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or the United States. Seconded by Council Member Dabbs, the motion carried unanimously.

Return to Regular Session and Adjournment

Council Member Rhodes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Dabbs, the motion carried unanimously.

ALL EXHIBITS CONTAINED HEREIN ARE HEREBY INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND MADE A PART OF THESE MINUTES.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rebecca Wyhof Salmon, Mayor

Attest:


Bonnie Bryant, City Clerk



