

MEETING MINUTES OF 5/18/2026

Posted: May 14, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Notice of Public Hearing

Washington Parish Council
Regular Meeting
Washington Parish Courthouse
908 Washington Street, Franklinton, Louisiana 70438
Courtroom One
Monday, May 18, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Council Chairman Reginald McMasters called the Public Hearing to order.

Ordinance No. 26-787: Adopt an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 19-649, Adjusting Commercial Customer Fees at the Choctaw Road Landfill and Other Matters Related Thereto.

Director of Finance/Personnel, Lacy Burris: We have not increased the commercial rate for the landfill since 2022, and the prices have been rising. We are trying to get our fees back in line with surrounding parishes and with inflation. This Ordinance is recommending \$45 per ton with a \$25 minimum. This is just for commercial, not residential. Residents won't pay anything.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak?
No one came forward.

Ordinance No. 26-788: Adopt an Ordinance to Levy Taxes for 2026 – Millage at the Same Rate as Prior Year – on Property Subject to Taxation in Washington Parish.

Lacy Burris: This is standard paperwork we must file every year to levy our taxes. It wasn't a reassessment year, so we do not have to worry about reordering. We will levy the exact same rates we did last year.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak?
No one came forward.

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AGENDA:

Item No. 1: Call to Order: Council Chairman McMasters called the meeting to order.

Item No. 2: Invocation: The invocation was led by Councilwoman Wagner.

Item No. 3: Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge was led by Councilman Rice.

Item No. 4: Roll call: Council Clerk, Jesse Applewhite called the roll. Present were Reginald McMasters, Carley King, Joe Culpepper, Shawn Rice, Kim Wagner, Clark Harry, and Steven Branch.

Item No. 5: Approval of Minutes: May 4, 2026, Regular Parish Council Meeting.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to approve the minutes? *No one came forward.*

Councilwoman Wagner: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to approve the minutes for the May 4, 2026, Regular Council Meeting.

Councilman Harry: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilwoman Wagner and a second by Councilman Harry.

Roll call of vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 6: Proclamation: American Public Works Association Public Works week.

Parish President, Ryan Seal read the proclamation and explained how so much work goes into maintaining the parish's infrastructure. It makes up a majority of the budget, and our infrastructure is improved through our Public Works employees; Director of Public Works, Alex Sumrall, Director of Transportation, Danny Knight, as well as many others.

Item No. 7: Appeal: Filed March 18, 2026, concerning the decision of the Washington Parish Planning Commission on March 17, 2026, in the matter of conditional Use Permit Application #2025-12-1916, proposing a new cell tower.

Karen Danos of Franklinton voiced her opinion and concerns of the proposed cell tower. She spoke on behalf of several of her neighbors who are also opposed to the cell tower.

Cameron Lee, Representative of Diamond Communications, appeared by Zoom meeting and reiterated that the company has complied with all permit requirements and addressed the concerns of the public.

Parish Attorney, Matt Garver stated that the company filed a complete application and submitted all documentation in conjunction with the Conditional Use Permit. He also explained the purpose of it being required as a Conditional Use Permit and not a permit by right means that there is something about it, whether it be a nuisance or concern that would not be appropriate for a permit as of right without conditions and the parish having the ability to put additional conditions on it. It is the Council's responsibility to approve, deny, or approve with conditions.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone else from the public like to speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Rice: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to approve Conditional Use Permit #2025-12-1916, to install a new cell tower.

Councilman King: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Rice and a second by Councilman King.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (3) Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: (4) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Council Chairman McMasters: The Conditional Use Permit Application #2025-12-1916, proposing a new cell tower has been denied. From the Chairman's standpoint, I know Diamond Communications met all permit application requirements, however, as a citizen of Washington Parish, I am concerned about the quality of life for the people living close to the proposed cell tower site. Washington Parish is large and I hope there can be another location found to install the cell tower that will not affect anyone's quality of life.

Item No. 8: Ordinance No. 26-787: Adopt an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 19-649, Adjusting Commercial Customer Fees at the Choctaw Road Landfill and Other Matters Related Thereto.

Council Chairman McMasters: We discussed this Ordinance during our public hearing. Would anyone like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Culpepper: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 26-787.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 9: Ordinance No. 26-788: Adopt an Ordinance to Levy Taxes for 2026 – Millage at the Same Rate as Prior Year – On Property Subject to Taxation in Washington Parish.

Council Chairman McMasters: We discussed this Ordinance during our public hearing. Would anyone like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Culpepper: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 26-788.

Councilman King: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman King.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 10: Resolution No. 26-1488: Adopt a Resolution Entering into an Agreement with Capital Area Finance Authority.

Lacy Burris: The Capital Area Finance Authority is a local housing finance agency, and they offer down payment assistance in the form of a forgivable grant to our residents. This Resolution would allow them to offer these programs to the citizens of Washington Parish.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Rice: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1488.

Councilwoman Wagner: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Rice and a second by Councilwoman Wagner.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 11: Resolution No. 26-1489: Adopt a Resolution Granting Approval to Washington Parish Fire Protection District Number 2, State of Louisiana, to Call and Hold a Special Election on November 2, 2026, to Authorize the Renewal of the Levy and Collection of an Eight (8) Mill Tax on Assessed Valuation of all Property Subject to Taxation in the District, for a Period of Ten (10) Years for the Purpose of Acquiring, Constructing, Improving, Maintaining and/or Operating Fire Protection Facilities and Equipment for the District and Paying the Cost of Obtaining Water for Fire Protection Purposes.

Lacy Burris: This is a renewal of Fire District No. 2's eight Mill Tax. This Resolution is a formality for putting it on the ballot of the November 2, 2026, election.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman King: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1489.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman King and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 12: Resolution No. 26-1490: Adopt a Resolution to Declare Surplus and/or Scrap Movable Property and Authorization to Dispose of Same.

Lacy Burris: We are getting ready to take the surplus to auction. We have deemed most of the list as surplus already. This Resolution is adding a few more items to the list.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Branch: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-1490.

Councilman Rice: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Branch and a second by Councilman Rice.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 13: Resolution No. 26-1491: Adopt a Resolution by the Washington Parish Council to Authorize the Parish President to Sign an Agreement Between Meyer Engineers, LTD. and Washington Parish Government to Provide Engineering Services for Sidewalk Construction (Segment A2) in Downtown Franklinton Through State Project No. _____ - LA 16.

Lacy Burris: This Resolution is for a sidewalk grant to build a sidewalk that runs along the other side of Main Street and will wrap around Franklinton Jr. High School and go down Bene Street. As part of the grant, we pay 10% of the construction costs and we must cover all the engineering costs.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes? *No one came forward.*

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 14: Public Participation:

D'Ann Davis, Director of the Washington Parish Economic Development Foundation, gave a report of recent events the department is doing. She spoke of a survey that will be going out to everyone and how they would appreciate everyone's input. D'Ann gave an update of Fast Sites Program where the state is loaning money to the Town of Franklinton to finish all the infrastructure at the Industrial Park. She also stated that the Economic Development Foundation

is forming 501 (3) of the foundation to apply for grants to help workforce development here in our parish. D'Ann also gave an update on the plans to form an Industrial Development Board.

Abigail Kemp on behalf of the Washington Parish Library System spoke about the Summer Reading Program that will begin in June. The program is six weeks and open to all ages. She invited everyone to participate.

Jackie Tate of Franklinton proposed an idea to build a Washington Parish Government Municipal Auditorium which would provide a place for events to be held in the parish such as graduations. Jackie also expressed concerns about safety issues of students walking home from after school practice on Hwy 436 that runs into Greenlaw Street in Franklinton. She stated there is no sidewalk or shoulder for the children to safely walk down the road in the afternoons.

Council Chairman McMasters: Would anyone else from the public like to come forward and speak before the Council votes to close public participation? *No one came forward.*

Councilman Culpepper: As no one has come forward, I make a motion to close public participation.

Councilman Branch: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman Culpepper and a second by Councilman Branch.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Item No. 15: President's Report:

Director of Finance/Personnel Lacy Burris: I have given everyone financial reports that are year to date through April. For revenues, we are at 28.3% of budget. For expenditures, 22.09% of budget. We are about a third of the way through the year. We have a net surplus year to date of almost \$716,000 and a total ending fund balance of \$19.6 million of all our major funds and of that, \$1.4 million is general fund.

Transportation Supervisor, Danny Knight gave a Transportation Report and stated that Kelvin Brown's crew picked up 259 bags of trash on 19 roads. We installed 17 signs on 11 roads and cleaned/cut at 5 locations. Multiple roads were completed totaling 622 tons of asphalt. Barriere Construction will begin road asphaltting on Wednesday, weather permitting.

Parish President Ryan Seal congratulated all graduates in the parish. He announced the Washington Parish Animal Shelter raised \$15,000 with the help of the Jordan's Way program. President Seal also let everyone know the Washington Parish Government office will be closed on Monday, May 25th in recognition of Memorial Day.

Item No. 16: Council Discussion:

The Council thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited the community to attend the next Parish Council meeting on June 1, 2026.

Councilman Branch encouraged everyone to visit the Washington Parish Library's Summer Reading Program.

Councilwoman Wagner congratulated all high school graduates. She spoke of participating at the Washington, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce at the Northshore Delegation Breakfast and it was a great networking event and a lot of positive news around the state. Wagner also stated that Tourism Day at the State Capitol is this Wednesday and invited everyone to attend.

Council Chairman McMasters thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He wished everyone a good Memorial Day and asked everyone to remember and pray for the families who will be remembering and honoring their loved ones.

Item No. 17: Adjourn:

Council Chairman McMasters: May I have a motion to adjourn?

Councilman King: I make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Councilwoman Wagner: Second.

Council Chairman McMasters: I have a motion by Councilman King and a second by Councilwoman Wagner.

Roll call of the vote as follows:

YEAS: (7) McMasters, King, Culpepper, Rice, Wagner, Harry, Branch

NAYS: ()

ABSTAIN: ()

ABSENT: ()

Council Chairman McMasters: Meeting adjourned.

Reginald McMasters, Chairman
Washington Parish Council

Jesse Applewhite, Clerk
Washington Parish Council

Order of Voting

Reginald McMasters	Kim Wagner
Carley King	Clark Harry
Joe Culpepper	Steven Branch
Shawn Rice	

The next meeting will be held June 1, 2026.

In accordance with the American Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance, please contact Jesse Applewhite, Clerk to the Council, at 985.839.7825, describing the assistance that is necessary.

(All Ordinances, Resolutions, and attachments in their entirety are available at the office of the Clerk to the Council at 909 Pearl Street, Franklinton, Louisiana or at 985.839.7825, or wpgov.org.)

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