

LUDLOW COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

September 11, 2025

City Attorney Patrick Grote called for a vote of council to select an officer to preside over the meeting. **Motion by Julie Terry Navarre, seconded by Paula Graszus, to appoint Sarah Thompson as presiding officer for the meeting. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: four ayes, one nay (Dave Ziegler), one absent (Abigail Miller).** Ms. Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Laurie Sparks called the roll, which showed the following council members present: Steve Chapman, Paula Graszus, David Ziegler, Sarah Thompson, and Julie Terry Navarre. Abigail Miller was absent.

ALSO ATTENDING: City Attorney Patrick Grote, City Administrative Officer Scott Smith, City Clerk Laurie Sparks, Fire Chief Mike Steward, Code Enforcement Officer Jamie West, Police Chief Bart Beck

Nomination and Vote to Fill the Vacancy in the Office of Mayor

Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, seconded by Ms. Graszus, to nominate Sarah Thompson to serve as Mayor for the remainder of the term. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes. Ms. Thompson chose to be administered the oath of office of Mayor following the meeting, which allowed her to vote as a councilmember during the meeting.

Motion by Mr. Chapman, seconded by Mr. Ziegler, to approve the minutes from the council meetings on August 14, 2025, and August 28, 2025. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

STAFF REPORTS

Fire Department

Chief Steward discussed his report and a recent meeting he attended regarding how traffic would be impacted by the new bridge construction project. Discussion on the status of junior firefighters and new volunteers.

Public Works

Mr. Hamant's report was included in the packet.

Code Enforcement

Mr. West discussed two upcoming fall clean up opportunities. Kenton County Public Works will have a clean up event on September 26th and September 27th. The Ludlow Fall Clean Up Day will be on Saturday, October 18, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the lot at Ash & Traverse Streets.

Police Department

Chief Beck discussed his monthly report. Officer Darrell Caldwell was recently hired to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Officer Zach Lindsley. Officer Caldwell has over thirty years of experience in law enforcement. Chief Beck advised that he recently completed an FBI training focused on handling active shooter threats and hardening soft targets.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Ms. Thompson advised that on 9/11, she wanted to honor those who lost their lives. Ms. Thompson thanked council and advised that she is ready to move on in her new role.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance – The Committee met and signed off on checks. Mr. Chapman discussed information he provided to council regarding the tax rate calculations.

Parks and Recreation – The Committee is working on a fall event with Reeves' Market scheduled for October. The Committee is also working on the Christmas Parade, which will be on December 2, 2025.

Public Works/Code Enforcement – The Committee did not meet.

CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Smith advised that the City is looking into adding benches, trash cans, and planters in the downtown area, which is estimated to cost \$35,000.00. The City will hopefully receive funding from Southbank Partners for the purchase of twenty-two new light posts in the downtown area, which would cost approximately \$39,000.00. Pruis Construction will be constructing the second phase of the Riverwalk behind the football stadium. Discussion on the feedback the City received from the public regarding how the property at 800 Elm Street could be developed. The City is working on getting Carlisle Field ready for next baseball season. The City needs to decide whether to accept the \$50,000.00 grant from UC Health for the Fitness Court. If accepted, the City would have to come up with \$150,000.00 to complete the project, which is money that may be better spent in other areas.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Audrey Dawn Roberts inquired about the process used to select someone to fill the vacant council seat. Mr. Grote advised that Council must nominate someone to fill the position within 30 days.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Second Reading of Ordinance 2025-10

Following a second reading by Mr. Grote, motion by Ms. Graszus, seconded by Ms. Terry Navarre, to adopt Ordinance 2025-10 *An Ordinance Enacting and Adopting a Supplement to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Ludlow, Kentucky*. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.

Second Reading of Ordinance 2025-11

Following a second reading by Mr. Grote, motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, seconded by Ms. Graszus, to adopt Ordinance 2025-11 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, in Kenton County, Kentucky, Adding Section 40.29 to the City's Code of Ordinances to Prohibit Falsely Impugning the Reputation of Employees, Residents, or Officers*. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: four ayes, one nay (Mr. Ziegler).

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading of Ordinance 2025-12

Discussion on the compensating tax rate (\$.530 per \$100.00 valuation) and the compensating rate + 4% (\$.551 per \$100.00 valuation). Mr. Chapman advised that this is a review year for the Kenton County Property Valuation Administrator, and the new assessments will be reflected next year.

Mr. Smith recommended that Council consider taking the compensating rate + 4% to keep a cushion for expenses. Ms. Terry Navarre advised that she would prefer to take the compensating rate + 4% but is open to conversation. Mr. Chapman advised that he would prefer to leave the tax rate at the current rate of \$.499 per \$100.00 valuation. Ms. Graszus stated that the training she received from Kentucky League Cities advised that any city that does not take the compensating + 4% rate is hurting their own pocket. Following discussion, council decided to have first readings of three different rates – the first would keep the rate the same, the second would set the rate at compensating +2%, and the third would set the rate at compensating + 4%. Mr. Grote completed the first reading of Ordinance 2025-12(a,b,c) *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, Kenton County, Kentucky, Fixing the Tax Rate for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025, and Ending June 30, 2026, Upon Real Estate, Personal, and Mixed Property in the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, and Fixing the Time for Payment and Penalty for Non-Payment of Same* with three different rates (each per \$100.00 valuation)--Ordinance 2025-12a: \$.499 real, \$1.667 personal and mixed; Ordinance 2025-12b: \$.534 real, \$1.842 personal and mixed; and Ordinance 2025-12c: \$.551 real, \$1.905 personal and mixed.

First Reading of Ordinance 2025-13

Mr. Grote completed the first reading of Ordinance 2025-13 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, Kenton County, Kentucky, Fixing the Tax Rate for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025, and Ending June 30, 2026, Upon Real Estate, Personal, and Mixed Property in the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, for the Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Special Ad Valorem Tax, and Fixing the Time for Payment and Penalty for Non-Payment of Same*. The rate would be set at \$.175 per \$100.00 valuation. Mr. Smith advised that the issue to increase the Fire & EMS tax would have to be placed on the ballot.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, seconded by Mr. Ziegler, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

(Mr. Grote administered the oath of office of Mayor to Sarah Thompson following the meeting.)

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Sparks, City Clerk

Attest: _____
Sarah Thompson, Mayor