

CITY OF SOUTH LEBANON
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
August 6, 2026
5:30P.M.

1. Mayor Burke opened the council workshop meeting at 5:30 p.m.

2. ATTENDANCE

Linda Allen - Present
Sharon Carmack - Present
Brenda Combs - Present

Lisa Fedor - Present
Maryan Harrison - Present
David Smith - Present

3. New Business:

Establishing Regulations for keeping Small Animals

Administrator Hacker introduced a draft small animal ordinance, noting that it was very much still in draft form and being presented at the workshop for the first time. He explained that a committee had been established, met on three separate occasions, and reviewed at least a dozen other political subdivisions — including townships, villages, and cities — to arrive at the draft.

Councilmember Carmack stated that the committee modeled much of the ordinance after that of the City of Norwood, Ohio. She presented the key provisions of the draft, summarizing that it would allow residents to keep up to eight (8) poultry birds per permit — including a maximum of one (1) rooster — as well as up to four (4) rabbits. A permit would be required through the zoning department at a cost of \$35, valid for a four-year term, and subject to inspection for compliance.

Discussion on Roosters

The question of whether to permit roosters generated significant discussion.

Councilmember Allen asked if the limit is 8, why would we have a rooster to reproduce. Councilmember Carmack argued that a rooster is necessary for self-sustainability, as it allows residents to replenish hens over time as the flock ages. Mayor Burke noted that laying hens do not require a rooster to produce eggs.

Councilmember Harrison indicated she wished to examine the rooster provision more closely, noting that residents in the city limits live in close proximity to one another and that being a good neighbor should be a primary consideration. Councilmember Carmack countered that other animals in the city produce comparable noise. The Council did not reach a conclusion on this point and indicated it merited further review. Law Director Kirby noted that other municipalities, including Carlisle and Delaware, Ohio, expressly prohibit roosters.

Discussion on Owner-Occupancy Requirement

Councilmember Allen raised a question regarding Section b.2 of the draft, which limits

poultry-keeping to single-family or two-family owner-occupied parcels. She asked for clarification that this provision would effectively exclude renters. Councilmember Carmack confirmed this interpretation, adding that landlords would need to be involved for any renter seeking to keep animals, likely through a lease provision. Mayor Burke concurred that a renter's lease would generally govern the matter.

Discussion on Shelter Placement and Setbacks

Councilmember Allen also raised questions regarding Section b.5, which states that no shelter shall be visible from the public street on which the residential property fronts, and that such structures must be no less than ten (10) feet from residential property lines. It was clarified that shelters are prohibited in front yards entirely, and the ten-foot setback applies to all remaining property lines — including rear and side yards. Council agreed that the language needed to be more specific to clearly convey this intent. It was further noted that a solid privacy fence would be required if a structure is visible from the street.

Discussion on "Prohibited Animals" Section Wording

Councilmember Fedor raised a concern about the language in Section 1, noting that the heading "Keeping or Harboring of Animals Prohibited" was confusing and could be read as a blanket prohibition on all animals before the reader reached the exceptions for chickens and rabbits. Mayor Burke and other members agreed the language lacked clarity. It was noted by Administrator Hacker that the prohibited animals list was drawn directly from Warren County's zoning supplemental regulations, which currently governs the city, and that the subsequent exclusions in Sections a and b represent the new permissions being created. The consensus was that the wording should be revised — with a suggestion to change the section heading to simply "Prohibitions" — to make the ordinance easier to understand.

Discussion on a Trial Period

Councilmember Allen proposed considering a limited trial period for the ordinance, suggesting that issuing permits to a small, defined number of residents first would allow the city to evaluate how the regulations function in practice before releasing them city-wide. Councilmember Allen framed this as a "beta test," noting that South Lebanon has not previously had such regulations in place. Councilmember Carmack expressed concern that a trial period would be unfair to those who invest significant money in setting up compliant enclosures, only to potentially face uncertainty if the program were later reconsidered. Mayor Burke offered that in Lebanon, Ohio, the number of chicken-keeping permits actually declined over time as residents discovered the demands of the practice, suggesting the program would not be overwhelmed. Law Director Kirby indicated a preference for simply drafting a sound ordinance and committing to it, noting that legislation can always be amended rather than green-lit and then red-lighted. This view was generally supported by the group.

Conclusion

The Council reached consensus that the draft ordinance should be refined with the discussed language corrections and clarifications and then brought back to Council for a formal vote. No action was taken at this meeting, as the item was not on the agenda for a vote.

New City Logo

Administrator Hacker introduced the city's rebranding initiative, noting it had begun prior to the current administration. He explained there are two components: the development of a new city logo and a separate city seal. The workshop discussion focused on the logo.

Administrator Hacker presented nine (9) variations of the new logo to Council, explaining that multiple variations were deliberately developed to allow flexibility of use across different applications — including city vehicles, letterhead, the water tower project, uniforms, and shirts — without requiring alterations to the base design. He emphasized that editing the logo independently would violate the city's own intellectual property rights, as the logo is to be registered with the State of Ohio as a trademark.

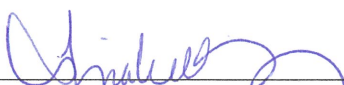
Administrator Hacker explained that the logo's design centers on the Little Miami River and the bike trail, which are primary identifiers of South Lebanon. The city's founding year of 1795 is also incorporated, along with a reference to South Lebanon's distinction as the oldest platted community from the Northwest Territory. He noted that one of the simpler variations — displaying only the artwork and the year 1795 — is intended as a long-term brand element that, once used consistently, would become recognizable without additional text, similar to approaches taken by nearby municipalities.

Mayor Burke also provided context on a prior logo attempt, explaining that an earlier effort had to be abandoned because the design had been created without proper intellectual property research, resulting in a conflict with another entity's trademark. Meta (Facebook) had demanded the city remove the image or face removal of the city's page. The new process was conducted through professional design consultants to avoid any such conflict.

Councilmember Allen expressed appreciation for the logo and indicated a preference for Variation No. 1, which includes the tagline "Remembering Our Past, Embracing Our Future," and suggested exploring whether that tagline could be incorporated into Variation No. 3, which features a slightly different layout. Administrator Hacker confirmed that the Council could request additional variations from the design consultants, and that any such changes would need to go through the consultants rather than be made independently.

Mayor Burke reminded Council that the logo and the city seal are two distinct items, and that what was presented at this meeting pertains solely to the logo. The meeting was adjourned before further detailed feedback could be collected, and it was indicated the matter could be revisited at a future meeting.

4. Mayor Burke adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:02 p.m.


Tina Williams, Director of Finance/Clerk


Linda S. Burke, Mayor

For an audio copy of the August 6, 2026 City of South Lebanon Council Workshop Meeting, please contact the Director of Finance at twilliams@southlebanonohio.org.

