

Town of Spring Lake  
Work Session Meeting of the Board of Commissioners  
Municipal Building  
300 Ruth Street  
Spring Lake, NC 28390

April 27, 2026

**MINUTES**

3:00 pm

The Spring Lake Board of Commissioners held a Work Session meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Spring Lake Municipal Building with Mayor Kia Anthony presiding.

**Board Members Present:** Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland  
Commissioner Tony Burgess  
Commissioner Soña L. Cooper  
Commissioner Jackie Jackson  
Commissioner Adrian Thompson

**Others Present:**

Carly Autry, Town Clerk  
Dennis English Jr., Interim Town Manager  
James Overton, Finance Director  
Michael Porter, Town Attorney  
Lieutenant Danny Sutton, Town of Spring Lake Police Department

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Anthony declared a quorum and called the meeting to order.

**2. INOVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Pastor Marsh gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Mayor Anthony requested to add Pursuant to NCGS §143-318-11(a)(3) – Attorney-Client Privilege under Closed Session and Discussion Regarding Kiosk Removal under New Business.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Action:** Motion to approve the April 27, 2026, Work Session agenda with the additions.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Second by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Vote:** Unanimous

**5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS**

**Action:** Motion to approve the draft minutes of April 11, 2026, Special Meeting (Budget Retreat).

**Motion by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Second by:** Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland

**Vote:** Unanimous

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nathaniel Fitch Sr., Spring Lake resident, invited the public to attend an upcoming community boxing event scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2026, with doors opening at 3:00 pm and matches beginning at 4:00 pm. He also requested a brief meeting with Mayor Anthony and Interim Town Manager Dennis English the following week to discuss potential collaboration with Commissioner Burgess and the community on future initiatives. Additionally, Mr. Fitch announced plans for a community engagement event, stating that a "Pizza Day" will be held on Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, with participation limited to the first 150 attendees, and noted that the event would involve outreach to Harnett and Hoke counties.

## 7. PRESENTATIONS

a. Update on Grants from Arts Council & Mural Dedications – Cynthia Wilt, Appearance Committee – Ms. presented an update on two (2) Grants from the Arts Council. She explained that they were working with a Municipal Arts Allocation Grant that funded a mural called "Embrace the Beauty Has Changed," which featured a military soldier with a flag and a field of sunflowers. This mural was already completed and located at Boyd's store.

Ms. Wilt described how they had money left over from the first Grant to purchase three (3) little libraries for books, with one planned for the park, one for the Rec Center, and a third location yet to be determined. She requested suggestions from the Board for the third location.

Ms. Wilt also detailed a second Grant called the Project Support Grant, which was being used at the park to create eight (8) concrete slabs with games. These games would connect with the existing mural featuring state symbols, incorporating elements like strawberries, blueberries, pine trees, bees, and dogwood flowers. The games would include alphabet and number activities to engage students in learning while being active.

Ms. Wilt announced that mural dedications would be held on Saturday, May 16, 2026, starting at 10:00 am at Boyd's location, followed immediately by a dedication at the park around 10:15 am. She mentioned that Boyd's would also be hosting an art celebration that same day with arts and crafts and vendors.

Ms. Wilt requested input on naming the concrete slab games, suggesting options like "Mendoza Park Game Slabs," "Mendoza Park Game Zone," "Fun Slabs," or "Playscape." The Appearance Committee would vote on the name at their next meeting in May. She also announced they would be accepting book donations for the little libraries.

Mayor Anthony expressed pride in the progress made since the mural project began, noting this would be the fourth mural including the paint slabs. She suggested placing the third little library near the schools to provide coverage across different areas of Town and asked about the age range for books. Ms. Wilt confirmed they wanted books for all reading levels from infants to adults.

Mayor Anthony also suggested adding a four-square game to the concrete slabs, and Ms. Wilt confirmed that one corner of the existing design already incorporated a four-square element.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

a. Update Regarding Annexation and Rezoning Petition for 945 Lillington HWY – Town Clerk Carly Autry – Clerk Autry explained that the petitioner had submitted a request for voluntary annexation of property located at 945 Lillington Highway into the Town along with a rezoning request. The Town would proceed with the annexation in accordance with NCGS §160A-31.

A Public Hearing notice would be published in the Fayetteville Observer on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, and the Public Hearing was scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2026. The rezoning would not be handled concurrently by the Town but would instead be processed through Cumberland County Planning and Inspections and reviewed by the Joint Planning Board (JPB), consistent with established practice and statutory requirements under NCGS §160D.

Clerk Autry clarified that this was the way it was supposed to be done because it was considered a zoning amendment that needed to go before the JPB for feedback from entities like the NCDOT. This approach ensured consistency with prior cases, alignment with the County's role in zoning, and compliance with state law, as initial zoning of annexed property was considered a zoning map amendment requiring planning board review.

b. Update Regarding System Development Fees (SDF) – Town Clerk Carly Autry – Clerk Autry explained that in accordance with NCGS §162A-209, the Town had completed the required 45-day public review period. The analysis was posted on the Town's website from March 10, 2026, through April 24, 2026, and no public comments, questions, or concerns were received.

The next step would be the required Public Hearing notice, which would be published in the Fayetteville Observer on Friday, May 29, 2026, and Friday, June 5, 2026. The Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for Monday, June 8, 2026. Clerk Autry noted that the dates on the agenda cover sheet were different from what she was presenting.

She explained that she had spoken to David Honeycutt, and he would be able to attend the Public Hearing on Monday, June 8, 2026, for any questions or concerns that might arise. He was unavailable for the Monday, May 11, 2026, meeting and preferred to be at the Public Hearing in case there were questions or concerns from the Board and/or citizens. The goal is to have the SDF adopted by the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, so they were still within the timeline. Following the Public Hearing, the Board could consider adoption of the SDF by Ordinance.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Budget Amendment (BA-22) FY2026 – Finance Director James Overton – Mr. Overton explained that they had received a Grant from the state of North Carolina for \$250,000 a couple of years ago to accomplish three (3) things: buying new software (including the GoGov software for reporting issues like

potholes), purchasing new software for permitting and the fire department, and buying new computers, monitors, scanners, and other hardware.

The Grant also covered digitizing their paper files, as they had boxes of files going back years. They had successfully purchased all the software and computers, with everyone receiving new computers. There was money left over from the hardware and software portions, plus the Grant had earned \$8,000 in interest while sitting in the bank.

Mr. Overton requested to move the remainder of the money from hardware and software to finish copying the digital files, since they still had many boxes to process. The increase would include using the earned interest, and he hoped to close out the Grant by the end of the year.

**Action:** Motion to approve Budget Amendment (BA-22) FY2026.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

b. Consideration of Cell Phone Service and Device Changes – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. –

Mr. English explained that when he was first hired, he was introduced to an app for his phone for Town business, but he had never understood how to use it and didn't know such technology existed. It had been extremely difficult to conduct any work through the current phone system, so he wanted to discuss with the Board the possibility of using a real cellphone for Town business.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed support for the consideration, explaining that when she first got on the Board, she had experienced similar difficulties with the app system. She had tried to set it up with help from the Town Clerk and IT, but it was too complicated. She stated she was in great need of getting a separate cellphone instead of using her personal phone.

Commissioner Cooper explained that the reason they went to the one-call system was for cost savings. The Town had to cut positions and services, and this was a budget decision made when they lost half their sales tax revenue. She emphasized they couldn't keep funding things they didn't have money for and that any decision should include knowing the final costs.

Mr. English stated that the hardware would not incur any additional cost, noting that several cell phones are already available in the Clerk's Office. He deferred to the Clerk to provide information regarding the cost of service.

Clerk Autry clarified that the Verizon One Talk app cost \$15.00 per user per month, while cellphone service would cost approximately \$30-35.00 per user per month.

Mr. English noted that currently only his phone and Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland's phone would need to be changed, though other Board members could speak to their needs.

Commissioner Cooper emphasized that as a government, they were supposed to treat everyone the same and couldn't make different arrangements for different people. She noted this change would also affect staff.

Mr. Overton explained that currently, all full-time and part-time employees, Commissioners, and the Mayor received a \$50 monthly cellphone allowance. Employees used their cellphones to clock in and out and could use them for the GoGov app. If the Town were to buy cellphones for Commissioners or the Manager, he would recommend eliminating the \$50.00 allowance for those individuals to avoid paying twice.

Commissioner Jackson suggested that if the app costs \$15.00 and cellphone service costs \$35.00, they could eliminate the \$50.00 allowance and still save money while providing better service.

Mayor Anthony asked if a cellphone policy had been created, and the Town Clerk confirmed that the previous cellphone policy was dissolved when the new personnel policy handbook was implemented.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated she didn't want the \$50.00 allowance and just wanted a separate cellphone that the Town Clerk had mentioned was available. She noted they had done this before and it wouldn't require additional money.

Mr. Overton stated that the proposed change would apply to the Mayor and Board if they choose to participate, while employees would continue under the existing allowance structure. Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland noted that Commissioner Cooper had suggested applying the change uniformly, which prompted her question regarding whether employees were included.

Commissioner Cooper stated that such decisions were usually made during the budget process and should include cost analysis before making any decisions.

Attorney Porter noted that English had a cellphone allowance in his contract, and Mr. Overton clarified that English received the same \$50.00 allowance as everyone else.

Mr. English clarified that he would like to use a phone that the Town Clerk had in her office, which the Town had already purchased, and apply his \$50.00 allowance toward the activation since his contract provided for a phone allowance.

Mayor Anthony suggested they needed to determine if it was possible to make the arrangement optional and get complete cost information before making a decision. She requested that staff bring back information on costs for phones versus apps and whether they could have optional arrangements for Board members.

Commissioner Jackson asked about purchasing phones that the Town already owned, and Attorney Porter indicated those would need to be surplus through the proper process.

Mayor Anthony requested that this item to be tabled and brought back to the next meeting with cost information for phones, apps, and clarification on whether optional arrangements were possible.

**This item was tabled and will be brought back before the Board at the next meeting, which is Monday, May 11, 2026.**

c. Discussion Regarding Kiosk Removal – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony explained that she added this agenda item after seeing construction happening in the driveway and learning from the Town Clerk that the kiosk was being removed. She questioned when this decision was made, who decided to remove the kiosk, and why it was being removed after they had just done a budget amendment for \$78,000 to install it.

Mr. Overton clarified that the kiosks cost about \$25,000 each (totaling \$50,000) and the total cost including installation was about \$70,000 for both kiosks, not an additional \$78,000.

Mayor Anthony expressed concern about wasting money on employee time and materials for both installation and removal, especially since no Board members knew about the decision in advance.

Mr. English reiterated that discussions regarding the removal of the payment kiosks began when he was first hired. He stated that a report was provided to the Board indicating minimal usage of the kiosks, including no usage at the Manchester Fire Station location and limited usage at the other location. He noted that citizens had also raised concerns about the kiosks on multiple occasions.

Mr. English clarified that the kiosks are not being discarded but will be relocated. He stated that staff intends to identify a more suitable, high-traffic location to maximize their use and expressed a desire for Board support in determining the most appropriate placement. He further noted that the kiosks had been removed and referenced prior discussions with Commissioner Burgess on the matter.

Mr. English stated that, as previously mentioned, the kiosks were not being utilized by citizens and that there had been feedback indicating a desire for the drive-thru to be removed. Mayor Anthony requested clarification regarding the number of citizens referenced. Mr. English responded that the feedback was received from Board members as well as citizens, in addition to data reflected in the usage report.

Mayor Anthony questioned which Board members had provided such input, noting that several members were unaware of the discussions. Mr. English reiterated that the decision was based on citizen feedback, input from some Board members, and the usage report. Mayor Anthony expressed concern that the decision appeared to have been made without a clear plan moving forward and asked whether it was based on conversations with Commissioner Burgess. Mr. English confirmed that it was based on discussions with Commissioner Burgess and citizen feedback.

Mayor Anthony further requested clarification on the number of citizens referenced, expressing concern that decisions should not be based on feedback from only a small number of individuals. She also raised concerns about the financial impact, noting the Town's current fiscal constraints and the potential

additional cost to relocate the kiosks. Mr. English again referenced the usage report, stating that there had been no usage at the fire station location.

Mayor Anthony then asked Mr. Overton whether there had been any issues related to payments or whether a lack of kiosk usage had resulted in an increase in missed payments.

Mr. Overton stated that they received money through the kiosks weekly and the purpose was to serve the approximately 400 people who paid late every month. The kiosks allowed citizens to pay after 5:00 pm, on nights and weekends, or in the morning before the office opened. He noted that the fire station kiosk wasn't being used because it was located in the middle of the grass rather than beside the driveway, requiring people to get out of their cars and walk to it. The Town Hall kiosk was being used almost daily, though not in huge volumes. He emphasized that removing them would throw away \$70,000 and suggested better placement instead.

Commissioner Burgess stated that people came to meetings regularly to discuss the kiosks, expressing that they didn't like them and weren't using them enough. He noted that part of the current Board didn't vote on the kiosks, and if he had been on the Board, he wouldn't have voted for them. He mentioned that many citizens had spoken about their concerns and that the company that sold them had offered to help sell them back.

Commissioner Jackson stated that there were legitimate complaints about the kiosks, noting that the majority of the Town was middle-aged and older. She observed longer lines inside the building because people didn't want to use the kiosk, and questioned whether kiosk removal was a day-to-day operational decision that the Manager could make independently.

Mayor Anthony clarified that the issue was that it never came before the Board, especially for something that cost so much money. Her concern was about misinformation to the Board and decisions being made unilaterally rather than through Board discussion.

Commissioner Jackson stated that the matter raised questions regarding whether the issue constituted a day-to-day operational decision and indicated that clarification should be obtained from the Clerk and Town Attorney. She noted that if it is determined to be a day-to-day operation, it may not require Board discussion, as Board members are not permitted to direct daily administrative functions. Commissioner Jackson suggested that, until additional information and cost figures are provided, the item could be tabled and revisited at a later time, noting that discussion without sufficient information would be unproductive.

Mayor Anthony reiterated her concern that the Board had not been informed, particularly given the potential financial implications. Commissioner Jackson responded that if the matter falls under day-to-day operations, the Town Manager would have the authority to proceed without Board involvement. Mayor Anthony emphasized that financial impacts warrant Board awareness. Commissioner Jackson clarified that her intent was to determine whether the action required Board knowledge or approval and reiterated the need to seek guidance from the Clerk and Town Attorney before proceeding further.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated that the kiosks were purchased prior to the current Board taking office and noted that, to her knowledge, there was no Public Forum held to gather citizen input before the purchase. She expressed concern that the purchase occurred shortly before the new Board was sworn in, limiting the opportunity for the incoming Board to participate in the decision. She further stated that she has received feedback from citizens indicating limited use of the kiosks and characterized the expenditure as a concern given the cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland also noted that she was unaware the kiosks were being removed on that day and referenced prior public comments from residents regarding the kiosks. She stated that, if relocation is an option, it should be considered. She further commented that if the action falls under day-to-day operations, it would not be appropriate to reprimand staff and emphasized the importance of citizen input in such decisions.

Mayor Anthony clarified that the discussion was not intended as a reprimand, but rather as part of conducting public business. She stated that such discussions must occur openly during the meeting and emphasized that the concern was based on the significance of the decision and the Board not being informed.

Commissioner Cooper emphasized that as a Board, they should all receive the same information, and no individual Board member should know about operations that others don't know. She noted that she had spoken to younger people who appreciated being able to make payments after hours, especially on weekends before cutoff dates. She stressed that if one (1) Board member knows something, all should know, and they should never hear about Town matters in the streets before being officially informed.

Attorney Porter explained that whether it's a day-to-day operation or something requiring Board approval depends on cost, with items over \$30,000 typically needing Board approval. He noted that while removal probably didn't cost \$30,000, any decision to sell the kiosks would require Board approval as surplus property.

Commissioner Thompson stated that anything involving the Board not knowing as a whole was the biggest issue, regardless of cost. She emphasized the importance of communication and noted that sometimes businesses need to move with the times, citing other utilities that don't offer kiosks but provide multiple payment options.

Commissioner Jackson stated that residents have historically utilized the existing drop box for after-hours bill payments without issue and questioned the necessity of the kiosk purchase. She expressed the opinion that the expenditure may not have been warranted and that the focus should be on the removal of the kiosks rather than the original cost.

Commissioner Jackson further stated that if the removal falls under day-to-day operations, it may not require Board involvement and suggested that continued discussion could be unnecessary. She emphasized the importance of distinguishing between operational authority and Board oversight, noting that the concern raised appeared to center on the removal of the kiosks without Board awareness. She also commented on the importance of communication between Board members and the Town Manager

and concluded by questioning whether expenditures under a certain threshold would be considered part of day-to-day operations.

Attorney Porter recommended tabling the discussion until the next meeting with information about costs to sell the kiosks and reinstall them elsewhere, noting they were discussing many unknowns.

Mr. English agreed and clarified that they still owned the kiosks and wanted to have a community forum to determine the best location for installation where taxpayers would get the most benefit from their investment.

**This item was tabled and will be brought back before the Board at the next meeting, which is Monday, May 11, 2026.**

d. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – First, Mayor Anthony reported that the Cumberland County Public Hearing for Manchester Elementary School closure was scheduled for that evening at 6:00 pm at Manchester Elementary. Second, Mayor Anthony mentioned they were planning another budget workshop with the date to be announced once finalized. Last, Mayor Anthony shared that she had participated in judging the Little Miss Manchester pageant over the weekend, which she described as a highlight and very enjoyable. She emphasized that the community cared deeply about Manchester Elementary, noting the active family base, student involvement, engaged staff, and community commitment to fighting for the school. She stated that even though school matters were outside their administration's direct control, they would use their platform to advocate for their students.

e. Board of Commissioners Report – Town of Spring Lake Board of Commissioners – First, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland noted Mayor Anthony's recent trip to DC. Second, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed appreciation for Robyn Chadwick's hard work with citizens regarding Manchester Elementary School, as well as Commissioner Jackson's support. Third, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland mentioned attending Willis Creek AME Zion Church in her capacity as an Ordained Minister and learning that one of their AME Zion Church Board members also served on the Board of Education. This Board member had been receiving many calls from people seeking information and planned to attend that evening's hearing. She emphasized their commitment to continuing to fight for citizens and children in Spring Lake, noting that decisions had likely already been made but they would persist in their advocacy. Last, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland thanked Mr. English for his hard work and noted that dealing with employees comprised 80-90% of a Town Manager's responsibilities. She acknowledged that people don't like change but felt they were moving in a positive direction and encouraged continued collaboration for the Town's benefit. First, Commissioner Thompson clarified that the Town Manager works for the Board, not the other way around. Second, Commissioner Thompson announced a community cleanup scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2026, at 8:00 am at Southwinds Plaza, providing all necessary supplies and asking only for volunteers' motivation. Last, Commissioner Thompson reiterated Mr. Fitch's event on Saturday, May 2, 2026, with doors opening at 3:00 pm at Reid Ross. First, Commissioner Jackson mentioned that the Manager should reach out to Board members, but Board members should also be able to reach out to him. Last, Commissioner Jackson reported on a successful baby shower event at Burgess Boxing that served over 230 women who were pregnant or had children, providing many needed items. Cumberland County Chairman Kirk deViere attended to show his support. She noted that the Spring Lake Family Resource

Center was hosted a similar event and mentioned that anyone needing diapers or items for newborns to 24 months could attend these resource events. First, Commissioner Burgess reported coming to Town Hall regularly to check on operations. Last, Commissioner Burgess reminded everyone about the mural dedication on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at 10:00 am and encouraged attendance. First, Commissioner Cooper reported attending a Mid-Carolina Council of Government on Aging Network Orientation, where she had a three-year appointment. They discussed programs available for seniors, and she looked forward to providing updates to the Board. Second, Commissioner Cooper reiterated that the Town Manager works for the Board and emphasized that all Board members should receive the same information via email about significant decisions like kiosk removal. Last, Commissioner Cooper encouraged Board members who hadn't taken ethics and essential municipal government classes to do so for better understanding of proper procedures.

f. Manager's Report – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. English reported four (4) main points: First, they continued meeting regarding merger regionalization feasibility, having met on April 22, 2026, with Cumberland County and Harnett Regional Water. Second, Focus Group 2 met on April 21, 2026, to discuss developing a model to remove blight across Town. Third, they would be submitting the first draft of their budget to the LGC on Friday. Last, he mentioned an upcoming agreement with PWC that could save approximately \$75,000 on water costs and requested Mr. Overton to approach the podium to provide details on the agreement.

Mr. Overton stated their rates with Fayetteville Public Works Commission (PWC) were scheduled to increase by 21% on July 1, 2026, which would cost an additional \$275,000 annually based on current usage averaging 22-23 million gallons per month. Under their current agreement, they had to buy a minimum of 13 million gallons monthly. The first 20 million gallons cost \$4.62 per thousand, with usage over 20 million costing \$6.74 per thousand, and over 24 million costing \$6.92 per thousand (which they had exceeded several times due to leaks).

Starting July 1, 2026, the base rate would increase from \$4.62 to \$5.59 per thousand gallons (a 97-cent increase). Rates over 20 million gallons would increase from \$6.74 to \$8.15, and over 24 million would go from \$6.92 to \$8.37. They had requested that PWC increase the lowest tier threshold from 20 million to 30 million gallons monthly since they had only exceeded 30 million once in four years (during a major leak in Christmas 2024).

PWC agreed to the new structure, allowing them to pay the base rate of \$5.59 for all gallons up to 30 million instead of paying the higher rates. This would limit their cost increase to about \$125,000 instead of \$275,000, requiring only a 3.5% rate increase instead of 5%. The five-year agreement would include a maximum of 20 million gallons daily for leak situations, a minimum purchase of 15 million gallons monthly, and annual reviews. If their usage consistently exceeded 28 million gallons for several consecutive months, there might be additional costs for increased capacity, but they weren't expected to reach that level without major leaks.

Attorney Porter inquired whether a draft contract had been provided. Mr. Overton stated that a draft is forthcoming and will be forwarded upon receipt. He noted that it is expected by this Thursday, or possibly

early the following week, and that the contract will hopefully be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

g. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – Attorney Porter reported that the issue with the law firm handling the SLPA matter was taking longer than expected. He had recently spoke to a senior attorney who promised to look into it, but he hadn't heard back. He indicated he might need to look for a different firm since they had handled step one but step two had not occurred after a considerable wait.

## 10. CLOSED SESSION

**Action:** Motion to approve to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(3) – Attorney-Client Privilege and Pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Motion to approve to come back into Open Session. No action was taken.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

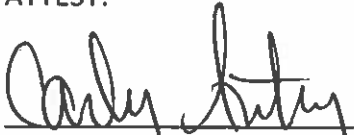
**Second by:** Commissioner Burgess

**Vote:** Unanimous


## 11. ADJOURNMENT

**Action:** There being no further business to come before the Board, Mayor Anthony adjourned the meeting at 5:18 pm.

ATTEST:

  
Carly Autry, CMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk



  
Kia Anthony  
Mayor