



## ATHENS CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF CALLED SESSION

The Athens City Council met in special called session on **Thursday, October 23, 2025**, at 6:00pm in the Athens City Hall Council Chambers with Mayor Eaton presiding. Vice Mayor Curtis led the invocation. Councilmember Pelley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll call:**

**PRESENT: Duggan, Pelley, Sherlin, Curtis, Eaton**

**ABSENT: None**

The following decisions were made and ordered to be part of the records of the Athens City Council.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE SPECIAL CALLED SESSION**

Notice is hereby given to all residents of Athens, Tennessee, and to all interested persons, that a Special Called Session of the Athens City Council will be held at Athens City Hall, 815 North Jackson Street, Athens, Tennessee, beginning at **6:00 p.m.** on **Thursday, October 23, 2025**.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Concerns of Councilmember Pelley
2. Councilmember Pelley's Retirement
3. Authorization of an Honorarium
4. Authorization to the City Attorney to Propose Documents to Dismiss the Ouster Suit regarding Councilmember Pelley.

Citizens will have the opportunity to provide public comments. Prior to the start of the meeting, all individuals wishing to address the City Council must sign in on the sheet provided at the entrance to the Council Chambers.

For additional information, please contact the Office of the City Manager at (423) 744-2702.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Eaton, Mayor

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Discuss and Take Action to Restore a Code of Conduct for Council Members.

**Vice Mayor Curtis moved to authorize staff to prepare a code of conduct for review and discussion during the November 10, 2025 Work Session; seconded by Councilmember Duggan.**

**PASSED**

**Roll call vote:**

**YEAS: Duggan, Sherlin:** called point of order and requested a recess

**NAYS: Pelley**

Mayor Eaton called a five-minute recess at 6:17pm. When the meeting resumed, the vote had not been completed.

### **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Glenn Whiting

**Councilmember Pelley made a motion regarding the code of conduct to require councilmembers to always positively represent city 24/7, always be respectful even if a citizen is not, and to not allow point of order during citizens' comments; seconded by Councilmember Sherlin.**

**Councilmember Sherlin moved to amend the motion.**

**Councilmember Pelley withdrew the original motion.**

**Councilmember Sherlin moved to authorize the City Manager to prepare a draft Code of Conduct, incorporating Councilmember Pelley's suggestions where feasible, for discussion at the November 10, 2025 Work Session; seconded by Councilmember Pelley.**

**PASSED**

**Roll call vote:**

**YEAS: Duggan, Pelley, Sherlin, Curtis, Eaton**

**NAYS: None**

**B. Discuss and Take Action to Revise the Citizen Comment Rules Regarding Citizens Speaking at Public Meetings of the Council.**

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Glenn Whiting
- Tyler Boyd

**Councilmember Pelley moved to change the citizen comment rules to allow five minutes instead of three minutes, move citizen comments to the front of the agenda, and have the attorney review the rules; Councilmember Sherlin seconded.**

**Councilmember Sherlin moved to amend the motion.**

**Councilmember Pelley withdrew the original motion.**

**Councilmember Sherlin moved to authorize the City Manager to prepare a draft for citizen comment rules, incorporating the suggestions of Councilmember Pelley, for discussion at the November 10, 2025 Work Session; seconded by Councilmember Pelley.**

**PASSED**

**Roll call vote:**

**YEAS: Duggan, Pelley, Sherlin, Curtis, Eaton**

**NAYS: None**

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Heath Wilcox
- Abby Carroll

**C. Discuss and Take Action to Establish a Policy and Procedures Concerning Complaints Against City Staff / Employees and City Council Members.**

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Glenn Whiting

**Councilmember Pelley moved to require that all complaints receive a written response; that any complaint involving the City Attorney or HR Director be outsourced; that a copy of the findings be provided to the complainant; and that, if the complainant disagrees with the findings, the Council would review the matter during a workshop and provide an opinion. He further moved to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to draft a procedure for handling complaints. Councilmember Sherlin seconded the motion.**

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**PASSED**

**Roll call vote:**

**YEAS: Duggan, Pelley, Sherlin, Curtis, Eaton**

**NAYS: None**

D. Discuss and Take Action on Engaging in Mediation between the City and Glenn Whiting to Resolve All Past and Current Disputes to include Removing Writing on the Downtown Walls Forever Allowing a Mural to be Painted.

Mayor Eaton removed this item from the agenda.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

- Heath Wilcox

E. Reading of a Letter about "Years on the Council" for Councilmember Dr. Dick Pelley.

Abby Carroll was invited to the podium by Councilmember Pelley to read a letter he had prepared.

F. Approve and Accept the Announcement of Councilmember Dr. Dick Pelley's Retirement Effective at the Adjournment of this Meeting and Take Action to Approve One Year of Salary Minus Taxes to be Paid in a Lump Sum in November 2025 (\$3,504.52).

G. Authorization for the City Attorney to Prepare and File Documents to Dismiss the Ouster Suit regarding Councilmember Dr. Dick Pelley Upon His Retirement.

City Attorney Caldwell took the podium to discuss Items F and G. He stated that the order to dismiss the ouster had been signed and filed, and would be reviewed and signed by Dr. Pelley following adjournment.

**Mayor Eaton moved to accept the resignation of Councilmember Pelley, approve a lump-sum payment of \$3,504.52 to Dick Pelley, and authorize the City Attorney to prepare and file documents to dismiss the ouster suit against Councilmember Pelley upon his resignation; seconded by Vice Mayor Curtis.**

**PASSED**

**Roll call vote:**

**YEAS: Duggan, Pelley, Sherlin, Curtis, Eaton**

**NAYS: None**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Eaton adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

  
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Randall Dowling, City Manager

  
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Larry Eaton, Mayor