ATHENS CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION

The Athens City Council met in regular session on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026**, at 6:00 p.m. in the Burkett L. Witt Council Chambers at Athens City Hall, with Mayor Eaton presiding. Vice Mayor Curtis led the invocation. Mayor Eaton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call:

PRESENT: McCowan, Duggan, Curtis, Eaton
ABSENT: Sherlin

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Tuesday, August 18, 2026 – Regular Session

Councilmember Duggan moved to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2026, Regular Session. Vice Mayor Curtis seconded the motion.

APPROVED
Roll call vote:

YEAS: McCowan, Duggan, Curtis, Eaton
NAYS: None

COMMUNICATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation presented to Tennessee Wesleyan University 2026 Baseball Team.

B. VIVID Award presented to Johnny Coffman.

C. A teacher and student representing Athens City Middle School reported on student reading achievements and the Accelerated Reader program.

D. Jack Headrick, a Tennessee Wesleyan University student and intern at Simmons Bank, presented information about the Red Sand Project that raises awareness of human trafficking.

CITIZENS COMMENTS GERMANE TO THE AGENDA

- Two individuals spoke in support of additional funding for the McMinn Senior Activity Center
- Glenn Whiting addressed the council on various issues.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Award Bid RFB #26-05 to Outdoor Solutions Services LLC for the demolition and clearing of condemned structures at 1506 Adams Street, 704 Haley Street, and 1504 View Street. (Bid Amount: $18,035.00).

B. Declare as surplus property and authorize the sale of each through GovDeals: 1994 John Deere Flail Mower (Asset #2551), 1997 John Deere 5300 Tractor (Asset #2757), 1998 John Deere Gator (Asset #2871), 2002 Bannerman Topdresser (Asset #3299), 2003 Toro 5500 Reel Mower (Asset #3404), 2015 Snapper Pro Zero Turn Mower (Asset #4243), and a 12-foot Ramp Trailer (Asset #594).

C. Declare as surplus property a Haulmark Tandem Axle Trailer (Asset #001338) and authorize its sale through GovDeals.

D. Approve the purchase from the Fleet Fund the following Fleet Replacement Vehicles for Public Works Department from Ford of Murfreesboro via Statewide Contract SWC-209 #88762: three (3) Ford Diesel F550 Trucks with rear dump beds for $274,965.00, one (1) Ford F250 with dump body for $74,607.00, and one (1) Ford F150 Crew Cab for $45,972.00.

E. Approve the purchase from the Sanitation Fund the following Fleet Replacement Vehicle for Public Works Department from Ford of Murfreesboro via Statewide Contract SWC-209 #88762: one (1) Ford F150 Crew Cab for $45,972.00.

F. Declare as surplus property and authorize each item be to sold through GovDeals, after the replacement vehicle is put into service: Ford F150 Street Cleaning Truck (Asset #4306), Ford F350 Street Maintenance Truck (Asset #4308), Ford F350 Street Maintenance Truck (Asset #4319), Ford F350 Street Construction Vehicle (Asset #4320), Ford F250 Street Cleaning Vehicle (Asset #4314) with Dump Bed (Asset #4321), and Ford F350 Truck Sanitation Vehicle (Asset #4326).

G. Approve Resolution 2026-24, a Resolution of the City of Athens, Tennessee, authorizing the acceptance of the donation of a 1925 American LaFrance Fire Truck from the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center and authorizing the execution of all documents necessary to complete the transfer.

H. Approve Hughes Environmental Proposal for City Hall Mold Remediation in the estimated amount of $30,592.08 plus a 15% contingency of $4,588.81, for a total not to exceed $35,180.89 and the execution of all documents necessary to complete the project.

I. Declare as surplus certain firearms currently in the possession of the Athens Police Department that are no longer of evidentiary value or are considered abandoned property under state law after being held for more than six months; and authorize the exchange of the firearms with Craig's Firearms for in-store credit toward the purchase of law enforcement equipment.

Vice Mayor Curtis moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember McCowan seconded the motion.

PASSED
Roll call vote:
YEAS: McCowan, Duggan, Curtis, Eaton
NAYS: None

ORDINANCES

-None-

OLD BUSINESS

-None-

NEW BUSINESS

A. McMinn Senior Activity Center Funding Request

Councilmember Duggan moved to approve reinstating the 10% contribution reduction for Fiscal Year 2026-27 ($2,200) for the McMinn Senior Activity Center. Mayor Eaton seconded the motion.

PASSED
Roll call vote:
YEAS: McCowan, Duggan, Eaton
NAYS: Curtis

B. ARP Stormwater Grant Contract Amendment

Vice Mayor Curtis moved to approve a contract amendment to the agreement with Wilson Construction Group for the ARP Stormwater Grant project, increasing the contract amount by $213,330.70 to a new total of $2,244,885.69. Councilmember Duggan seconded the motion.

PASSED
Roll call vote:
YEAS: McCowan, Duggan, Curtis
NAYS: Eaton

C. Bid RFB #26-06 - Repair, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation of Local Streets

Mayor Eaton moved to award Bid RFB #26-06 to Rogers Group, the lowest bidder, for a total base bid of $1,327,084.00. Councilmember Duggan seconded the motion.

Council discussed that the bid exceeded the $1,150,000 budgeted amount by $177,084 and the potential effect on the following fiscal year's budget.

PASSED
Roll call vote:
YEAS: McCowan, Curtis, Eaton
NAYS: Duggan

D. First Reading of an Ordinance 1161, an ordinance to amend Title 1, Chapter 1-II of the Athens City Code by replacing Section 1-44 to revise the Order of Business for City Council Meetings.

Vice Mayor Curtis moved to approve on first reading Ordinance 1161, amending Title 1, Chapter 1-II of the Athens City Code by replacing Section 1-44 to revise the order of business for City Council meetings. Councilmember McCowan seconded the motion.

PASSED
Roll call vote:
YEAS: McCowan, Curtis, Eaton
NAYS: Duggan

E. Proposed Revisions to the Employee Handbook

Vice Mayor Curtis moved to approve the proposed Employee Handbook revisions including Prorated Longevity for Voluntary Separation (option 2). Under this option, an eligible employee who voluntarily separates from City employment before October 31, after completing at least three years of continuous employment, would receive a prorated longevity payment based on the portion of the longevity year worked. If an eligible employee dies while employed, the prorated payment would be made to the employee's designated beneficiary. An employee who is involuntarily terminated would not receive a prorated longevity payment. Councilmember McCowan seconded the motion.

Councilmember Duggan moved to amend the proposal to address longevity separately. Mayor Eaton seconded the amendment.

Amendment
FAILED
Roll call vote:
YEAS: Duggan, Eaton
NAYS: McCowan, Curtis

Main Motion
PASSED
Roll call vote:

YEAS: McCowan, Curtis, Eaton
NAYS: Duggan

F. **New Business**

Mayor Eaton moved to have the City Attorney initiate an investigation by an independent agency regarding allegations of the misappropriation of city funds over an extended period, including funding provided to the Athens Parks Foundation, three commercial sanitation account discounts, and city employee vehicle allowance reimbursements and mileage claims. The motion died for lack of a second.

G. **New Business**

Mayor Eaton attempted to read aloud a message from the temporary employee assigned through a staffing service to perform the Executive Assistant's duties until a permanent City Manager was appointed. The Interim City Manager had shared the message with the City Council. Councilmembers objected, stating that the matter concerned an administrative or personnel issue within the City Manager's authority.

Vice Mayor Curtis moved to adjourn the meeting and Councilmember McCowan seconded the motion. No vote was taken. Mayor Eaton recessed the meeting at 7:58 p.m., until further notice.

RECONVENED REGULAR SESSION

The Athens City Council reconvened at 5:45 p.m. on **Tuesday, October 20, 2026** in the Burkett L. Witt Council Chambers at Athens City Hall. All members of the Athens City Council were present.

REPORTS

A. Finance Department Monthly Report

B. Fire Department Monthly Report

C. Police Department Monthly Report

REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER

-None-

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Two individuals signed up to speak at the September 15, 2026, meeting. At the reconvened meeting on October 20, 2026, Mr. Wright was not present, and Mr. Whiting commented on various issues.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Eaton called for a roll call vote on adjournment.

Roll call vote:

YEAS: McCowan, Duggan, Sherlin, Curtis, Eaton
NAYS:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:49 p.m. on October 20, 2026.

Larry Eaton, Mayor

Bridget Roberts

Bridget Roberts, Interim City Manager