

THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS
OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, WILSON COUNTY, TN

May 26, 2026

The Board of Mayor and Alderpersons of the City of Watertown, Wilson County, Tennessee met on May 26, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. at the Watertown Community Center.

Alderpersons Present: April Pearson, Caleb Barrett, Kyle Stacey, Laura Cromer, Steve Casey and Mayor Mike Jennings.

Aldersperson Absent: Howell Roberts

Mayor Jennings called the meeting to order with welcoming everyone, a quorum was present.

Mayor Jennings stated the Community has lost a giant when we lost John Jewell. Mayor Jennings has said many times over the years that every small town needs a John Jewell because if you have a job that doesn't pay anything but needs to be done and promotes this Community John would make sure it would happen. John's late wife Jan was the same way; if they had an idea or given an idea they would make sure great things happen. The Jewell's along with the McComb's brought the Excursion Train and Jazz Festival to Watertown. John was the Chairman of the Planning Commission, Chairman of the Board of Zoning Appeals, served on the Historic Preservation Committee and was Representative on the Nashville and Eastern Railroad at the time of his death. John will be greatly missed by this Community and everyone that had the pleasure and honor of knowing him.

Mayor Jennings congratulated all the graduates and their families, wishing everyone the best in their future.

Mayor Jennings led in prayer.

Motion made by Caleb Barrett and proper second by Kyle Stacey to approve the April 14th minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-COMMENTS

Jenna Brown representing the Chamber was present to discuss the closure for Main Street during the July 4th Parade. The Parade will begin at 4:00 going down Main Street. Mayor Jennings stated Main Street has always been blocked off during the Parade time frame by the Police and Fire Department. Jenna asked for more police presence during the Parade to try and keep the "no squirt zone" from getting wet since that section has the Classic Cars. They will be advertising that the rules will be enforced this year and expect everyone to obey the rules and guidelines to keep everyone safe.

Mayor stated he has been part of the Parade since the first one and it's hard to control residents in their yards. People know water balloons, water cannons, any items that can do harm are not allowed. They would do what they can do.

Aimee Harmon stated that the Chamber has always split the cost of the Fireworks with the City. The Chamber is happy to do this year but this will be the last year that they can afford and doesn't

necessarily affect or benefit the Chamber in a way that is beneficial to the businesses, which is what the Chamber tries to promote.

Mayor Jennings stated the City will still have a Fireworks Show, people have gotten used to having a Fireworks Show and everyone enjoys. Mayor Jennings understands the Chamber's reason.

Laura Cromer asked Bob Morgan to make sure the hydrant at the old football practice field is locked off so no one can be using during the parade. Bob had taken care of last year and is still locked.

Cody Blythe stated that the Church of God in Carthage would like to have a church affiliated softball tournament to be held on June 27th. Cody presented a list of rules and he will be umpiring to make sure everyone obeys the rules. This tournament is to raise funds for the youth leadership group. Jonathan Smith will have concessions open for tournament.

Mayor Jennings stated when a tournament is held to raise money for a charity that no fee is charged but if lights are used a fee will be charged for the use of lights.

Steve Casey stated to make sure they provide a Certificate of Insurance showing the City as an additional insured.

Motion made by Laura Cromer and proper second by Steve Casey to approve the Carthage Church of God to use the fields on June 27th for Tournament as long as a COI is provided. Motion carried unanimously.

FIRE REPORT

Blake Haun reported the Fire Department had a total of 41 calls, 19 inside the city and 22 within the County.

Blake stated some maintenance work has been done. When the pump testing was done there were some deficiencies found with leaking valves. The repairs and invoice should be all completed by June 1st.

Blake stated after many months of consideration he has decided to resign as the Fire Chief to be effective as of June 1st. He stated he has had some recent changes in life and would like to have more time to enjoy family. Blake has missed out on a lot throughout the years with the children and would like to be more present as they get older. It was a very tough decision to make trying to decide what the right decision was. Blake will stay involved in the Community.

Mayor Jennings stated Blake has done a marvelous job for this Community, he's led the department, trained the personnel to deal with any emergency and is very thankful for everything he has done for the department. Blake has continued a long line of outstanding Fire Chiefs over the years. The Fire Department has had Bill Jewell, Ken Fuston, and John Jewell and then Blake took over after John retired. That period of time covers a total of 40 years and says a lot about the department which has grown over the years. Mayor Jennings stated we have the best Fire Department and is very appreciative of Blake and hates to see him give position up but completely understands.

Blake thanked the Council, it has been a tremendous honor to have been the Chief.

SEWER REPORT

Dale Smith stated the State has visited a few times concerning the plant optimization plan they are working on for the Sewer Plant. This year their plan is to reduce the phosphorus discharges and try to utilize some old equipment.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Henderlight thanked Blake Haun for his service as Fire Chief.

There were no questions for Chief Henderlight.

Kyle Stacey stated that he had spoken with someone concerning the 911 button at the Police Department. He was sent to the corporate side and they have requested paperwork, the cost will be \$150.00 per month which may can be discounted. The cost could be split since it operates the whole building. After the paperwork is sent we will be contacted with time frame of having repaired.

Caleb Barrett asked what the process is for music videos? Chief Henderlight stated the process goes through him, which is to collect the \$1500.00 fee, provide a COI and the music video companies pays for the police security.

Caleb had a few calls stating the business owners would have liked to have had notice that some of the square area was being closed. He understands from a security standpoint a lot of information cannot be provided in advance.

Chief Henderlight stated that he always advises the companies that it's their responsibility to go to each business and let them know what will be happening. Chief has spoken with Aimee, Chamber President and they have worked out a plan going forward that Aimee will be notified and she can send out a mass email to business owners.

Mayor Jennings stated at times we are not notified until the last minute of someone going to be in town and details are not known until last minute.

Kyle Stacey suggested if a 24 hour notice is not given that the fee is increased.

Laura Cromer had spoken with someone in the music industry and the fees have increased in other towns up to \$5000.00

Steve Casey agrees that we are still on the low end of the fees and maybe start charging an expedite fee added for notice of 24 hours or less.

Mayor Jennings suggested for Council to bring back a recommendation to next meeting.

Laura Cromer stated she had few calls and the process has been discussed but who pays for the officers to work?

Chief Henderlight stated the City does not pay any officers to work the music video shoots, the company that pays the fees also pays for any and all officers to work. The City still has an officer on duty separately to answer any calls and is only working for the Police Department.

April Pearson asked the best way to notify residents on road closures? Chief Henderlight stated that the roads were only closed for a few seconds or few minutes at each time during filming. Later in the day when traffic picked up they moved locations for safety.

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Mayor Jennings stated that Jonathan Smith and family have just completed a very successful community baseball-softball league.

Jonathan stated they have completed closing ceremonies for the season, they had 343 kids that officially signed up plus more played after signups. They will be hosting an Adult Church League beginning June 8th, all churches are welcome with a \$350.00 fee. Also a new League will be added called the Purple Warriors League that will be for any child with Special Needs. The signups were posted last night and Jonathan has had 10 kids to sign up already, so this will be a great program.

Mayor Jennings stated that he believes this is the best thing that has ever been proposed and looks forward to the League.

Jonathan asked during the fall ball season if they can get more police presence.

RAILROAD MUSEUM REPORT

Chris Ferrari stated they had meeting with National Steam and Tennessee Central, they had opportunity to share their appreciation for where things are heading and progressing. They feel comfortable with the communication and are ready for the next phase. A letter was received from Bob McComb, the managing partner for Watertown Place LLC that they have decided not to sell the property now. Nashville Steam will have announcements coming soon with some exciting steps on the Steam Engine. Tennessee Central has stepped up to reinforce their commitment to Watertown. A box car is going to be donated and the plan is the box car will become a Model Railroad Museum and will be named after John Jewell. The plan is the stationary box car would be turned into a Model Railroad Museum. John was very involved with the train and the Model Train Railroad was very important to him, he even has a big Model Railroad in his house. John's son are very excited about this and would like to donate some items as well in memory of their dad. Tennessee Central has an old box caboose that would be part of the rail yard exhibit, it has history of Watertown and can be used as part of a mobile museum to travel representing Watertown.

CIVICS PLANNING COMMITTEE

Laura Cromer stated it was discussed at meeting who is responsible for paying the Police for working the Train Robbery Event, have it set in stone on the time frame for square to be shut down and the business owners being notified? In the past the square has been shut down for an hour for the shootout but wasn't discussed or voted on at Council Meeting. Is this something we can do to get approved for those two dates when the Train Robbery happens, to be shut down for an hour time frame?

Mayor Jennings suggested having a list of events that are planned for the rest of year so can be discussed and voted on, that way everyone will know what can or cannot be done. The list can be attached to minutes and will help moving forward on the event dates.

Kyle Stacey stated the complaint he had was the set up crew was parked on the square and was taking up the parking spaces.

Steve Casey stated the set up crews for any events need to set up and move their vehicles from the square area and suggested have list for events for 6 months at a time for approval.

Chris Ferrari is taking over the Train Robbery Events, this last event wasn't communicated with the Desperados but going forward they will be advised on the parking on the square issue.

Chief Henderlight stated the organization that is hosting an event is responsible for paying the police for road closures such as Chamber, Historic or Railroad Event.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Jennings stated the Budget Report dated May 22nd looks good and will meet twice next month for budget approval.

Mayor Jennings stated there has not much progress on the Sewer Project due to the rain the last few days. Cody Blythe stated they have bored under the road, once they get the water out from the hole itself they will be able to slide the casing pipes in and continue on starting pushing pipe through.

Mayor Jennings stated he was told the project would be completed by June 30th.

Laura stated she had saw a post on Facebook on Mother's Day that there was a problem with water spewing out and within minutes Cody responded he was in route. Laura wanted to let Cody know she appreciates his hard work.

Mayor Jennings stated there was no Turntable Meeting held last week, the next meeting is set for June 18th.

Steve stated as far as the grant goes the Federal Government is still processing the paperwork for approval for funding to move forward to start bidding project.

Mayor Jennings stated the property that was voted on last month, the title search has been completed and survey will be completed soon and will be ready to close.

Mayor Jennings stated that Ross Colona with the Tennessee Board of Utility Regulation had requested to be on the agenda, he was not present.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Jennings stated we have audit contract for Fiscal Year 25-26 from Mr. Poole to approve. Mayor Jennings reached out to him to make sure he can assure audit will be completed on time (12-31-26) since was filed late last year. Mr. Poole has committed to have audit done within 30 days after the books are closed and he has received. Mayor Jennings then asked Buddy Discus's office if they can commit to have everything to Mr. Poole, Jessica committed to have to Mr. Poole early enough that he will have plenty of time to make deadline.

Motion made by Steve Casey and proper second by Kyle Stacy to approve Audit Contract for Fiscal Year 25-26. Motion carried unanimously.

Laura stated if they don't keep their commitments this year that we look at other firms next year.

Mayor Jennings stated TBOUR has been requesting additional studies with a third party and he has discussed with Bob Adams who completed our Rate Study if he can complete any work that is necessary. Mr. Adams fees are \$300.00 per hour.

Motion made by Kyle Stacey and proper second by Caleb Barrett to approve hiring Bob Adams for \$300.00 per hour not to exceed \$5000.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings recommended Assistant Chief Joe Decker be moved to Fire Chief for Fire Department, this has to be recommended and Council confirms.

Motion made by Steve Casey and proper second by Laura Cromer to confirm Mayor Jennings's recommendation to make Joe Decker Fire Chief effective June 1st. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings stated John Jewell was Planning Commission Chairman and would like to appoint Brant Martin to serve on the Planning Commission. Brant and his family have recently bought a house in town and has agreed to accept position.

Mayor Jennings will bring to next meeting appointments for Board of Zoning, Railroad Authority and Historic Preservation Commission.

Jacob Swazey with Historic Watertown stated with the State of Tennessee Main Street Program that was set up years ago that a new Resolution needs to be approved and signed to move forward. This program is to receive grants to help the City and all organizations that benefits the Community.

Motion made by Kyle Stacey and proper second by Laura Cromer to approve Resolution for Downtown Improvement Program. Motion carried unanimously.

Jacob Swazey discussed Founder's Day Event to be held September 26th that will consist of 5K Run, activities for kids, scavenger hunt and food. The 5K Run-Walk will begin in front of the church area at 8:00 and has been discussed with Chief Henderlight the route for safety. The streets will open back up as the runners clear on Main Street. Depot and Main will be closed at 7:30 which will not take more than 10 minutes for the runners to clear that portion. The runners will go down Waters Avenue and around the Waters House back out on Main Street and cut back behind Main –Public Square to Woodland to Cornwell and back to Main Street and turn around at the Elementary School, turn around and come back. Jacob has spoken with Chief Henderlight to keep one lane open on Main Street for the long stretch so the street is not completely closed down. The total run-walk at the most will take an hour. The festival area will be decided later but will not shut down the square area. There will have walking distance to the square for the historical scavenger hunt.

Motion made by Steve Casey and proper second by Kyle Stacey to approve 5K Run-Walk and subject to the details that are provided at the next meeting for the Founder's Day Event. Steve would like to have a bullet point outline of the planned activities. Motion carried unanimously.

Jacob will provide bullet point outline, schedule and all the information needed at the next meeting.

Mayor Jennings stated the Bike Run will be stopping at Gazebo on June 13th for water and bathroom break.

The next meeting will be held on June 16th at 6:00 P.M. with a Special Call Meeting to approve Budget and any related matters concerning the Budget later in the month.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

April Pearson- No Comments

Caleb Barrett stated where MTE has installed new poles in front of his house, the speed limit sign is now behind the new pole and can't be seen. Cody Blythe will take a look at and see what needs to be done.

Kyle Stacey stated he has been researching how to solve our issue with the burn pile. EPA would not have an issue with, since isn't any real major things you have to do for having a compound composite site. After it has been composited, you can bury or separate it. That makes a lot of the burnable aspect back to make burnable again since the leaves die off and the tree life that is there now can be moved back to the burnable section. We may able to pursue trying to figure out how to make that work.

Mayor Jennings asked how do we find out more information and how to start process?

Kyle stated need to discuss more and look at the best area and how to section.

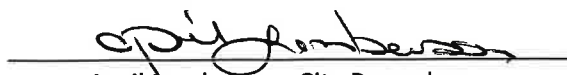
Mayor Jennings stated he responded to email to gentleman concerning the burn pile, at the last meeting it was approved opening by appointment only with the Fire Department or City Guys being present to oversee and he hasn't pursued but will before next meeting.

Laura Cromer stated she was asked how the City handles an open seat on one our boards?

Mayor Jennings stated there are different requirements, such as for the Planning Commission it states the Mayor and one Council Member which the Council elects and the other three members are appointed by the Mayor. On the others the Mayor recommends and the Council confirms, if the Mayor recommended someone and Council don't confirm then the Mayor would bring back another recommendation.

Steve Casey added to Kyle's suggestion, when we're looking at the burn pile we need to give consideration to potentially moving to a different location.

Motion made by Laura Cromer and proper second by Kyle Stacey to adjourn meeting. Motion carried unanimously.


Michael R. Jennings, Mayor
April Lamberson, City Recorder

