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

August 18, 2026

The Board of Mayor and Alderpersons of the City of Watertown, Wilson County, Tennessee met on August 18, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. at the Watertown Community Center.

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

Mayor Jennings called meeting to order with welcoming everyone.

Mayor Mike Jennings stated he received letter of resignation from April Pearson resigning as a City Council Member effective immediately. Mayor Jennings accepts reluctantly, April has done a great job serving on the Council and thanked her for her service. Mayor Jennings stated she will be missed.

Mayor Jennings wanted to thank all the Emergency Personnel Staff for taking care and checking on residents during the extreme heat. He stated that's the beauty of living in a small town where everyone takes care of each other.

Mayor Jennings stated he will need to leave in an hour to attend another meeting and Vice-Mayor Casey will finish the meeting.

Mayor Jennings led in prayer.

Motion made by Howell Roberts and proper second by Kyle Stacey to approve July 14th minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-COMMENTS
Ron Appel, owner of Farmhouse Coffee Shop was present concerned about an existing staircase that is used for people to get access to the sidewalk. If cars are parked in that area it's hard for customers to go to any of the businesses on that side of square, this blocks or prevents the access of the stairway. His suggestion is to have a no parking zone or designate the parking space to allow access.

Mayor Jennings stated this was discussed at the last meeting and he was going to take a look at for solutions and he hasn't done at this time. Mayor Jennings stated we will get this resolved and need to make sure it's ADA compliant.

Zach Boles was present requesting to host a tournament on October 17th and all proceeds will go to the Round Lick Church Youth Group. Zach presented a waiver that will be used and is compliance with everything they need for rules and regulations. The plan is begin games early and be finished before dark so the use of lights shouldn't be needed, but if they do use they will pay the fee.

Motion made by Laura Cromer and proper second by Steve Casey to approve the use of softball field for tournament to be held on October 17th and to provide Certificate of Insurance with the City listed as an additional insured. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings stated that Kim Clark would like to use the park on September 26th to have Fall Festival with all proceeds going toward The Jake Harris Scholarship Foundation. There will be corn hole tournaments, games, chili cook-off, pumpkin carving contest, arts and crafts. The event will be from 1:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.

Motion made by Laura Cromer and proper second by Howell Roberts to approve Fall Festival to be held on September 26th at the park and to provide Certificate of Insurance with City Of Watertown listed as an additional insured. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Fire Report

Chief Decker was not present, report was sent to Council for review. Mayor Jennings stated if any questions or comments contact Chief Decker.

Sewer Report

Dale Smith stated he didn't have anything exciting to report this month.

Mayor Jennings stated he had meeting with Brian Conrad, Steve Jones, Clayton Anderson, Dale Smith and Bob Morgan to discuss the completion date for Sewer Project. Mayor Jennings stated by the end of this week they will be ready to cut over to the new line and the line in the creek will be killed. There still will be some cleanup and checklist to do.

POLICE REPORT

Steve Casey asked about the staffing status? Chief Henderlight stated he has had three to resign and has some candidates but for right now he has moved shifts around and has been working out. He has hired Michael Agee full-time that has 25 years of law enforcement experience and already has been approved by the post. Chief Henderlight stated he has one applicant that is a certified officer that has worked for the County and Mt. Juliet, at one time was SRO officer that would like to work part-time.

Motion made by Kyle Stacey and proper second by Howell Roberts to approve hiring Michael Agee as full-time officer. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Kyle Stacey and proper second by to approve hiring Felicia Deck as a part-time officer. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Henderlight stated all three Tahoe's have been down and all are out of warranty now but have the powertrain warranty. The warranty has expired on the years instead of mileage. The vehicle that was involved in an accident will be going to the shop and have already received check for the repairs. Maybe at some point can look into a fleet program since the ones we have now would receive a good value due to the low mileage.

Mayor Jennings stated he doesn't understand why we are having so many issues with the Tahoe's if they still have low mileage? Mayor Jennings stated they will discuss, he needs more information and details on program.

RAILROAD MUSEUM REPORT

Chris Ferrari stated the new edition of the Whistle Post has been released and is Watertown based. This edition contains a lot of information about Watertown and the business advertisements.

Terry Bebout reached out to Chris after the last train event and there is an issue on the west side of sidewalk on Central, there's a section of sidewalk that has separated. They had someone to trip on the uneven section and wanted to let the City know this needs to be fixed at some point, it's on the rail yard side. Chris had someone to look at and the quote is $4800.00, for now the city guys could put some cones up to make visible for the September train event.

Steve Casey asked if this section will be torn up when the construction begins on the Turntable? Steve suggested having the city guys take a concrete saw and cut that section out and install a temporary patch for a temporary fix. If construction will begin in the next 6 -8 months it wouldn't be a good idea to spend $5000.00 and then tear up sidewalk area.

Mayor Jennings suggested have that section temporarily closed.

Chris will advise Terry that options are being discussed to figure out best solution for now and the future.

Chris introduced Stephen Hook, project foreman for the Nashville Steam. The steam test has been completed and received certification.

Stephen stated he is serving as the Project Foreman for the Nashville Steam Preservation Society and has the privilege of acting as Vice President for the Watertown Railroad Museum. Stephen stated they completed a successful Steam Engine Test on July 15th with the witness of Federal Inspectors. This was the first time they had fully fired up the locomotive's boiler and tested all the work that has been done to the locomotive since it was removed from Centennial Park in 2019. Stephen stated this endeavor started in 2016 and the non-profit was founded in 2015 and started working in the park to begin restoring the locomotive to operation. Ten years later here we are, they have verified the locomotive holds pressure and boils water. The inspectors had some very favorable comments about the work that has been performed and the outcome of the test and were impressed with the amount of work that has been done. The next step will be the phase of restoration and beginning an actual live operations test, hopefully will begin the first quarter of 2027 depending on their last fundraising campaign. As to date 4 million has been raised and 3.3 million has been spent on the restoration. Stephen stated they are excited to bring this experience to Watertown and bring this piece of history to life and complete the dream that everyone has entrusted them to make happen.

CIVICS PLANNING COMMITTEE
Laura Cromer stated the Bluegrass Festival will be September 5th and train will be here. The five parking spots by the gazebo has already been approved to sit bleachers but need to get approval to move the bleachers.

Motion made by Steve Casey and proper second by Kyle Casey to approve moving the bleachers to the square on Friday (September 4TH) for the Bluegrass Festival. Motion carried unanimously.

September 19th will be the Train Robbery.

September 26th will be Founder's Day.

Mile Long Yard Sale will be October 3rd, no changes except will be adding a Beer Garden and application has been completed just waiting for background check to be sent. The Beer Garden will be at Bob McComb's property at the red building area and stage will be on the City Property.

October 31st will be Halloween on the square with the Chamber providing candy along with businesses providing candy also.

OLD BUSINESS
Mayor Jennings stated Budget Amendment that amends last year's budget was voted on first reading in July and needs to be approved on second reading.

Motion made by Kyle Stacey and proper second by Steve Casey to approve on second and final reading Ordinance #2026-05 to amend the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings stated Ordinance #2026-06 for Certified Tax Rate increase needs to be passed on second reading. He had requested an explanation for the increase, the preliminary rate was calculated using preliminary assessment data and provided for planning purposes. The Certified Tax Rate was calculated by the Comptroller's Office after all appeals, corrections and assessment changes were finalized. Any difference between the two rates reflects changes in the assessment role that occurred during the set certification process. That is the reason for the increase from $0.3417 to $0.3802 per $100.00 of assessed value for the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year.

Motion made by Steve Casey and proper second by Howell Roberts to approve the Certified Tax Rate $0.3802 (Ordinance 2026-06) on second and final reading. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings stated we normally have a Turntable meeting on the third Thursday but haven't received any notice yet.

Mayor Jennings stated when he presented the budget he had added the same amount as the previous year for the Library. They had requested an additional $1,500.00 for the 26-27 Budget. Mayor Jennings recommended Ordinance to Amend the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 26-27 to appropriate additional $1,500.00 for Library. The Library is a benefit and asset to our Community.

Motion made by Kyle Stacey and proper second by Laura Cromer to approve on first reading Ordinance #2026-07 to Amend the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 26-27 for additional appropriation for the Library. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings stated the Budget Report looks normal for this time of the year, we have few CD's renewing in the next few weeks.

Mayor Jennings stated Bob Morgan has a list of items to declare surplus property that he would like to scrap that consists of old meters.

Motion made by Steve Casey and proper second by Laura Cromer to declare list of items surplus property to be scrapped. Motion carried unanimously.
List attached to minutes.

Mayor Jennings made an announcement that Julie Robinson, City Judge had sent him her resignation and has agreed to stay thru the next court date since we can't appoint a Judge until our next meeting.

Mayor Jennings stated he received letter from Tim Davis, City Attorney tendering his resignation.

Mayor Jennings will bring recommendations for City Judge and City Attorney to the September meeting.

Mayor Jennings stated we need to declare a vacancy on the Council and accept April Pearson's resignation so we can consider filling the position at the September meeting. The Charter states when a Mayor or Alderman dies, resigns or moves out of the city that office becomes vacant and the vacancy shall be filled by the City Council at the next council meeting. Such person elected to fill such office for the unexpired term. In this case the person elected will serve until November 2028.

Motion made by made by Caleb Barrett and proper second by Kyle Stacey to accept April Pearson's resignation and declare vacancy on the Council. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Jennings stated there are some conflicts for the next meeting date September 15th. The alternate dates will be September 17th or 24th for the next meeting.

September 11th at noon will be 911 Observance at the Pavilion.

Mayor Jennings excused himself from meeting and Vice-Mayor Steve Casey took over meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Howell Roberts- No Comments

Steve Casey-No Comments

Laura Cromer-No Comments

Kyle Stacey stated he has checked on parts for the Trolley and doesn't think the cost to repair will be to much but will probably need some new tires.

Caleb Barrett asked who maintains the Saddle Club Arena, the grass is overgrown and needs to be mowed and weed eated. April Lamberson stated that she has spoken with two Saddle Club representatives recently and they are aware they need to come and maintain the property. As soon as they have some rain free days this will be taken care of.

Caleb asked if the City can potentially look into speed bumps on some of the side streets, East and West Main Street since he has had several calls asking if this can be done. There's only so much patrolling the police can do, people are complaining of speeders.

Steve Casey suggested when the paving project begins that this can be looked at to be included in the estimates/bids.

Motion made by Caleb Barrett and proper second by Laura Cromer to adjourn meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Michael R. Jennings, Mayor

April Lamberson, City Recorder