



Agenda Item

IV. A. Allowing brewpubs, microbreweries, taprooms, etc.

Overview

During the December 8, 2025 work session, Main Street Athens requested the City Council to consider adding/amending appropriate land use regulations to allow brewpubs/microbreweries/taprooms in the city limits as an economic development tool (see attachment). The Athens Municipal Regional Planning Commission discussed the potential allowance of brewpubs, microbreweries, taprooms, and similar uses within the City during their Jan. 5, 2026 Regional Planning meeting. Following discussion, the Planning Commission determined that additional research and further discussion are necessary before an ordinance can be drafted and formally considered.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to determine the next step.

Affected Departments

Community Development

City of Athens, TN — Downtown Brewery Zoning Update

Why this matters now

Mainstreet Athens received an inquiry from an established Knoxville brewery to open a production brewery and taproom downtown. Downtown momentum is strong with the recent opening of Pie Hounds and a wine bistro planned—adding a brewery would amplify foot traffic, dining options, and local spending.

Current zoning barrier

Alcohol manufacturing is currently limited to the Heavy Industrial (I-2) district, which includes a minimum lot size threshold (commonly 5 acres), making downtown sites ineligible under present code.

Proposed zoning change

Allow "Brewery (beer manufacturing)" as a permitted use (or "use permitted on review") in B-2 Central Business and B-3 Intensive Business districts, with performance standards (odor/noise control, hours, delivery logistics) and retail/taproom allowed on-premises. Maintain distance, safety, and permit requirements under Title 8 and Beer Board oversight.

City revenue sources (illustrative rates)

Revenue Source	Illustrative Rate / Amount
Local Wholesale Beer Tax	\$35.60 per 31-gallon barrel
Beer Permit Privilege Tax	\$100 per year; \$250 application fee
Sales Tax (combined)	9.75% (7% state + 2.75% county)
Liquor-by-the-Drink (on-premise)	15% of gross alcoholic beverage sales
State-Shared Beer (barrelage) Tax	\$4.29 per barrel; 10.05% shared to cities by population
Business Tax (gross receipts)	Applies at state and city level (classification-based)
Personal Property Tax (City)	\$1.0078 per \$100 assessed value

Tennessee peer cities with breweries downtown

Knoxville, Nashville, Sweetwater, Tellico Plains, Dayton, Copperhill, Etowah, Lenoir City, Johnson City, Elizabethton, and Tullahoma.



Agenda Item

IV. B. Continuation of HHM as the City Auditors for FYE June 30, 2026

Overview

HHM has served as the City's auditor for the prior fiscal year and has expressed desire to continue that relationship. Based on HHM's prior performance and familiarity with the City's operations, the Finance Director believes the firm is qualified to perform the audit efficiently and in compliance with all applicable state requirements.

HHM submitted a proposal dated January 5, 2026, with a total cost of \$60,000, consisting of \$55,000 to conduct the FYE June 30, 2026 audit of the City's financial statements and \$5,000 to prepare the Chart of Accounts Crosswalk as required by the Tennessee Comptroller. There is no increase in fees as compared to the prior year.

Finance Director Mike Keith has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval at the stated amounts.

A proposal letter from HHM and a memorandum from the Finance Director are attached.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Finance



FINANCE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Randy Dowling, City Manager
FROM: Mike Keith, Director of Finance
DATE: January 6, 2026
RE: Auditors for year ending June 30, 2026

Upon completion of the June 30, 2025 audited financial statements, I requested that HHM provide a proposal for the 2026 audited financial statements.

Attached is their proposed fee for the 2026 audit. I am recommending approval of the proposal at the amounts stated in their letter as there is no increase in the fee. Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information concerning this matter.



January 5, 2026

To the Mayor and City Council Members
City of Athens, Tennessee
815 N. Jackson St.
Athens, TN 37303

Dear Mayor and Council:

Thank you for allowing us to submit this transmittal letter to perform audit services for the City of Athens for the year ending June 30, 2026.

We have served as the City's auditor for the prior fiscal year and wish to continue our relationship. We believe that our expertise, as demonstrated during the prior year's audits, proves that we are qualified to serve the City of Athens.

Our proposed fee to audit the City of Athens's financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, is \$55,000 and \$5,000 for the Chart of Account Crosswalk, required by the Comptroller.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal and trust it is responsive to your requirements. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam O. Jones'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.



Agenda Item

IV. C. Resolution 2026-01, A Resolution to Declare the Week of January 25-30, 2026, as Athens Flood Awareness Week.

Overview

A resolution is adopted each year to document the City's ongoing public education efforts related to flood risks and flood insurance. Declaring Flood Awareness Week supports the City of Athens' participation in the National Flood Insurance Program by demonstrating proactive outreach to residents, particularly those in flood-prone areas, and helps maintain good standing with FEMA by showing the City is actively informing the public about flood hazards and available insurance options. Attached is an informational brochure that is distributed to appropriate/impacted property owners every January and posted on the city's website.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Community Development

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01

**A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE THE WEEK OF JANUARY 25-30, 2026,
ATHENS FLOOD AWARENESS WEEK**

WHEREAS, the City of Athens, Tennessee is composed of areas of designated flood hazard as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and,

WHEREAS, these areas of Athens, Tennessee are subject to damages and losses due to flood waters; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Athens, Tennessee is a program participant in the National Flood Insurance Program having applied for and complied with program guidelines; and,

WHEREAS, many owners of properties located in flood prone areas of Athens, Tennessee do not have supplemental flood insurance policies; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Athens seeks to inform all of its residents that flood insurance is available to cover structures and their contents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens, Tennessee has a responsibility to keep its citizens fully advised of governmental activities and programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Athens, Tennessee, as follows:

That the recitals above are true and accurate and form a part of this Resolution; and

That meeting in regular session this **20th** day of **January 2026**, that the week of **January 25-30, 2026**, is hereby declared to be "Flood Awareness Week" for the City of Athens, Tennessee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by this body that all citizens of Athens, Tennessee are hereby urged to learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program benefits as they can apply to their property.

ON MOTION BY _____,

SECONDED BY _____,

said Resolution was approved by roll call vote.

LARRY EATON, Mayor

RANDALL DOWLING, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CHRISTOPHER M. CALDWELL, City Attorney

FLOODPLAIN PERMITS

All residents should be aware that any development or construction in a floodplain is subject to regulation and requires a building permit issued by the city's building inspector. **If you intend to build, make improvements to your property, or fill any land, it is necessary to contact the city's building inspector prior to beginning any project.** Residents are also encouraged to report any illegal development to the city.

CONSTRUCTION DESIGN

- Strengthening and minimizing water damage to basements
- Building homes with water resistant materials
- **Elevating buildings**
- Diverting water
- Erosion control measures



HISTORY OF FLOODING IN ATHENS

THE MOST SERIOUS SOURCE HAS BEEN, AND CONTINUES TO BE, OOSTANAULA CREEK, AT WHICH SOME 47 IMPORTANT FLOODS HAVE BEEN RECORDED WITHIN THE LAST 100 YEARS. ALL MAJOR RECORDED FLOODS: 1896, 1922, 1946, 1947, 1963, 1973, AND 2003 HAVE OCCURRED BETWEEN JANUARY AND APRIL.

The most damaging flood in the lower Hiwassee River Basin was on Oostanaula Creek which began to overflow its banks early in the morning of March 16 and crested late on the evening of the same day. The creek rose to heights of eight to ten feet over its banks through the City of Athens and was the highest ever recorded in the downtown district.

The record breaking flood entered 31 homes, 37 businesses, 2 industries, 1 church, and a natural gas substation causing extensive property damage.

Floods of March 1973 in the Tennessee River Basin



The account of the 1973 flood along Oostanaula Creek is only one example of many floods causing property damage within our community. Although the City of Athens has taken measures to reduce flood potential, the simple fact is any flood of the past can be expected to reoccur.

Damage from these floods need not to happen and assistance in seeking methods to reduce such losses is available.

This information is designed to cover the basics of flood protection. Much more detailed information is available from the Flood Protection Library located at the E. G. Fisher Public Library.



FLOOD PREVENTION ATHENS, TENNESSEE



THE FLOOD HAZARD IN ATHENS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Study completed in 1986 lists seven sources of flooding within the city.

Oostanaula Creek
North Mouse Creek
& its tributaries
Smokey Branch
Walker Branch
Black Branch
Forrest Branch
Blue Springs Branch



FLOOD INSURANCE

You should be aware that flood insurance ***is not*** part of your normal homeowner's policy. However, flood insurance is available through local insurance agents and the National Flood Insurance Program. Almost any walled and roofed building that is principally above ground may be insured. Coverages are available on residential, nonresidential, and small business properties covering both buildings and their contents.

FLOOD SAFETY MEASURES

In the event Athens suffers from flood waters, the following actions may maximize your safety and help minimize the flood impact.

- Keep battery powered radio tuned to a local station.
- Stay put and wait for rescue teams.
- **Never attempt to walk across stretches of flood water that are more than knee deep.**
- If time permits, turn off all utilities. Never touch electrical equipment unless it's in a dry area.
- Do not drive where water is over the roads.
- Prior to re-entering your home, check for structural damage.
- On re-entry, never use an open flame and check the electrical system before restoring any power.



FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES

There are two types of flood protection.

Those measures you can take at the time of a flood and construction techniques designed to reduce flood damage. Consider the following actions:

- Mitigation for homeowners
- Build with flood damage resistant materials
- Install sewer back flow valves
- Anchor fuel tanks
- Raise electrical and mechanical component systems

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Construction and maintenance is an essential element in the ability of our city to reduce damage during flooding conditions. Athens Public Works Department regularly checks and clears drainage ways to insure proper disposal of these waters. **In addition, it is a violation of the city ordinance to alter the drainage system without an appropriate permit in any way. This includes blocking in any way or the dumping of any debris into those channels.** Potential hazards needing to be checked should be reported to the Athens Public Works Department. Report violations of the ordinance to the city's codes enforcement officer.

PROTECTION AGAINST FLOOD CONDITIONS

- Moving as many household items to as high a place as possible
- Anchor and secure any items that may become debris in moving water
- Protect valuable equipment that cannot be relocated by using various waterproofing measures





Agenda Item

IV. D. Resolution 2026-02, A Resolution Authorizing the City of Athens, Tennessee, to Apply for Grant Funding Through the Tennessee America 250 Grant Program - For Footsteps Through History: America 250 at Heritage Park, a Historical Walking Trail.

Overview

This resolution authorizes the City of Athens to apply for a \$20,000 Tennessee America 250 Grant to fund interpretive signage along the new walking trail at Heritage Park. The project, Footsteps Through History: America 250 at Heritage Park, will highlight the shared history of the United States, Tennessee, and Athens in conjunction with the nation's 250th anniversary and the park's 50th anniversary, creating a permanent, ADA-accessible educational and recreational amenity for the community. This is a 100% funded grant but the City will be responsible for any costs in excess of \$20,000.

A memorandum from the city's Project Manager is attached for additional information as well as Resolution 2026-02.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Public Works and Parks & Recreation



PUBLIC WORKS

TO: Randall Dowling, City Manager
FROM: Kevin L. Helms, Project Manager
Cc: Matt Siniard, Parks and Recreation Director
DATE: January 5, 2026
SUBJECT: Footsteps Through History: America 250 at Heritage Park, a Historical Walking Trail

Background

Heritage Park was dedicated on July 4, 1976, in recognition of the Bicentennial Anniversary of the United States of America. All amenities at the park have either been renovated over the past seven years or are currently being renovated, and a walking trail is currently being added to the park with all construction activities scheduled to end in 2026 allowing for the park to reopen. The timing is ideal as it occurs during the Semisesquicentennial Anniversary of the United States of America and the Fiftieth Anniversary of Heritage Park which provides the city with a unique opportunity to further enhance the park while celebrating these milestones.

The State of Tennessee through the Tennessee State Museum has created a one-time grant funding opportunity for projects which document, preserve, and/or share the history of the state and its local communities. City staff are requesting approval to apply for a \$20,000 grant to install trail signage to present the interconnected history of our country, state, and city. The signs will be installed in chronological order, thus providing park users with the opportunity to walk through 250 years of history. The grant requires no local match though the city would be responsible for any costs exceeding \$20,000. At this time, it is anticipated that the grant funding will be sufficient to complete the project.

The following text is from the draft version of the grant application narrative:

Footsteps Through History: America 250 at Heritage Park is a long-standing outdoor public exhibition developed by the City of Athens, Tennessee, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The project consists of a historically interpretive walking trail at Heritage Park featuring a series of permanent signs placed along a designated path. Each sign interprets a ten-year period of history, beginning in 1776 and continuing through 2026.

Each interpretive sign will present a structured overview of its decade, including the sitting President of the United States, Governor of Tennessee, and Mayor of Athens, along with significant events in United States, Tennessee, and Athens history. This consistent format emphasizes historical leadership, civic continuity, and the interconnected nature of national, state, and local history.



PUBLIC WORKS

Interpretive content will be developed in conjunction with several organizations, including the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum, to ensure historical accuracy, scholarly integrity, and inclusive interpretation. Examples of local history to be included on the signs include nationally significant events such as the 1946 Battle of Athens, which illustrates themes of democratic participation, veterans' civic engagement, and local responses to corruption in the post-World War II era.

The selection of Heritage Park is historically significant. The park was originally dedicated on July 4, 1976, to commemorate the nation's Bicentennial. Over the past seven years, the City of Athens has completed a comprehensive two-phase renovation of all park facilities to ensure long-term public use and accessibility. The second phase is currently under construction and scheduled for completion in May 2026. Upon completion, the park will be re-dedicated on the 50th anniversary of its original dedication and the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

Heritage Park is also located along the National Park Service-designated Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Where appropriate, interpretive content will acknowledge this designation and reflect on the broader national and regional histories connected to removal, migration, and the experiences of Indigenous peoples, reinforcing inclusive and reflective storytelling.

As part of the renovation effort, a new ADA-accessible walking trail is being added to Heritage Park. This trail will serve as the physical foundation for Footsteps Through History, transforming the park into an immersive, place-based humanities experience.

Submitted as a Project Support Grant, the project focuses on humanities-based interpretation of history, civic life, and community identity. Core themes include democracy and governance, social and economic change, conflict and reform, community development, and civic participation. The project directly supports Tennessee's America 250 initiative by grounding national commemoration in local experience. The target audience includes Athens and McMinn County residents, students, families, visitors, and lifelong learners. As a free, outdoor exhibition in a public park, Footsteps Through History ensures broad access, long-term public benefit, and lasting impact beyond 2026.

Action Item

Approve Resolution 2026-02 authorizing the city to submit a Tennessee America 250 Grant application for funding in the amount of \$20,000 to create a Historical Walking Trail at Heritage Park.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-02

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF ATHENS, TENNESSEE, TO APPLY FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE TENNESSEE AMERICA 250 GRANT PROGRAM – FOR FOOTSTEPS THROUGH HISTORY: AMERICA 250 AT HERITAGE PARK, A HISTORICAL WALKING TRAIL.

WHEREAS, the City of Athens has obtained an LPRF Grant for ongoing improvements at Heritage Park which includes the addition of a walking trail scheduled to open in 2026; and

WHEREAS, Heritage Park was originally dedicated on July 4, 1976, in recognition of the Bicentennial Anniversary of the founding of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Heritage Park’s rededication will occur during the year of the Semiquincentennial (250th) Anniversary of the United States of America and the Fiftieth (50th) Anniversary of the original dedication of Heritage Park; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee America 250 Grant Program provides funding for projects which document, preserve, and/or interpret the history of the state and its many local communities; and

WHEREAS, Footsteps Through History: America 250 at Heritage Park will consist of a permanent, outdoor, humanities-based public exhibition featuring interpretive signage along the walking trail currently under construction to share the interconnected history of the United States, the State of Tennessee, and the City of Athens; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens desires to submit a grant application to the Tennessee State Museum under the Tennessee America 250 Grant Program to request funding in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to provide for the design, manufacture, and installation of the interpretive signage; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project represents a long-term public investment that will promote historical storytelling, expand access to humanities education, encourage community engagement, and support physical well-being through active use of public spaces.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, TENNESSEE, THAT:

The City Manager or his designee is hereby authorized to prepare and submit a grant application to the Tennessee State Museum under the Tennessee America 250 Grant Program requesting \$20,000.00 in funding for Footsteps Through History: America 250 at Heritage Park, a permanent, ADA-accessible historical walking trail and public exhibition.

The Mayor, City Manager, or their designee is further authorized to sign all necessary documents, agreements, and assurances on behalf of the City of Athens in connection with this grant application.

ON MOTION BY _____,

SECONDED BY _____,

said Resolution adopted and approved by roll call vote on the **20th** day of **January, 2026**.

ATTEST:

Larry Eaton, Mayor

Randall Dowling, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Christopher M. Caldwell, City Attorney



Agenda Item

- IV. E. Resolution 2026-03, A Resolution Authorizing the City of Athens, Tennessee, to Apply for Funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program for Improvements to the Congress Parkway and Decatur Pike Intersection and Adjoining Corridor.

Overview

The city recently completed and approved a Traffic Safety Action Plan during the March 18, 2025 regular session. This plan prioritizes safety improvements and justifies investment decisions. By developing and adopting this traffic safety action plan, the city can now seek federal and state funding for traffic safety improvements as outlined in the plan.

100% grant funding is available through the Federal Highway Administration BUILD Grant Program. City staff is requesting City Council to authorize applying for federal funding for one of the priority projects as outlined in the plan - intersection improvements at Congress Parkway and Decatur Pike. The grant application would consist of traffic signal replacement, increase turn lane vehicle storage capacity, offset alignment for left turn lanes for enhanced visibility, addition of pedestrian structures, traffic signal preemption for emergency vehicles, and synchronized timing of traffic signals with time-of-day plan.

Resolution 2026-03 authorizes the City of Athens to apply for Federal Highway Administration BUILD Grant funding to design and construct safety and mobility improvements at the Congress Parkway and Decatur Pike intersection and adjoining corridors. The project aligns with the City's adopted Traffic Safety Action Plan and, if awarded, would provide 100% federal funding toward an estimated \$3.73 million project to improve traffic safety, connectivity, and overall corridor function.

A memorandum from the Public Works Department is attached for additional information as well as Resolution 2026-03.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Public Works



PUBLIC WORKS

TO: Randall Dowling, City Manager
FROM: Kevin L. Helms, Project Manager
Cc: Ben Burchfield, Public Works Director
DATE: January 5, 2026
SUBJECT: Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program

Background

During 2024 the City of Athens applied for and received a grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant Program to develop a Traffic Safety Action Plan designed to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities resulting from traffic accidents on the city's roadways. Upon completion of the plan in 2025, the City applied for another SS4A Grant to implement recommendations associated with the Congress Parkway and Decatur Pike intersection and adjoining corridor. In December 2025 the city was notified that the grant application was not funded.

While the final project scope is yet to be determined, it will be a large project containing at a minimum the following components:

- Traffic signal replacement
- Increased turn lane vehicle storage capacity
- Offset alignment for left turn lanes for enhanced visibility
- Addition of pedestrian infrastructure
- Traffic signal preemption for emergency vehicles
- Synchronized timing of traffic signals with time-of-day plans

The project cost is estimated to be \$3,730,000 making acquisition of grant funding a critical part of implementing improvements at this location, which was prioritized near the top of all locations studied within the Traffic Safety Action Plan. Due to the type and location of project, grant funding can be requested for up to 100% of the total cost for the project.

Action Item

Approve Resolution 2026-03 authorizing the city to submit a BUILD Grant application for funding in the amount of \$3,730,000 to implement improvements at Congress Parkway and Decatur Pike.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-03

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF ATHENS, TENNESSEE, TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FROM THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) THROUGH THE BETTER UTILIZING INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT (BUILD) GRANT PROGRAM FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CONGRESS PARKWAY AND DECATUR PIKE INTERSECTION AND ADJOINING CORRIDOR.

WHEREAS, the FHWA through the BUILD Program administers grant funds to assist local governments with implementing road improvements to improve safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism, state of good repair, partnership and collaboration, and innovation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens recently developed and adopted a Traffic Safety Action Plan funded in part by a grant from the FHWA Safe Streets for All Program which prioritized improvements at this location; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens needs financial support to implement this project which has an estimated cost of \$3,730,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the BUILD Program provides 100% funding for the specified type and location of the project; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens supports the application for funding to design and implement improvements at this location which are consistent with the adopted Traffic Safety Action Plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, TENNESSEE, THAT:

The City Manager or his designee is hereby authorized to prepare and submit a grant application to the FHWA BUILD Program.

The Mayor, City Manager, or their designee is further authorized to sign all necessary documents, agreements, and assurances on behalf of the City of Athens in connection with this grant application.

ON MOTION BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

Said Resolution adopted and approved by roll call vote on the **20th** day of **January, 2026**.

Larry Eaton, Mayor

Randall Dowling, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Christopher M. Caldwell, City Attorney



Agenda Item

IV. F. Fee Schedule Changes for Baseball/Softball Field Rentals at Regional Park, Heritage Park, Prof Powers Park, and Fisher Field

Overview

Due to improvements being made to the baseball/softball fields at Regional Park (new artificial turf), Heritage Park (complete field renovations and new lighting), Prof Powers Park (updated grading and drainage), and Fisher Field (updated grading and drainage), the Parks & Recreation Department and the Recreation Advisory Board are recommending the fees to rent these updated fields be increased effective February 1, 2026. Those proposed fee schedule increases are attached (highlighted in red).

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Parks & Recreation



Parks & Recreation Department

Park Fee Schedules

Regional Park

Item	Fee
Disk Golf Course	\$100 per day
Lake Pavilion	\$15 for 2 hours, \$5 each additional hour
Lake Pavilion with Kitchen	\$15 per hour + \$25 refundable key deposit
Soccer Fields (1-9)	\$2.50 per half hour each field
Baseball/Softball Fields (1-5)	\$5 per hour each field/ \$25 per hour each field including lights
Splashpad/Playground (Green Pavilion)	\$30 for 2 hours during season \$2.50 per half hour off season
Splashpad/Playground (Purple Pavilion)	\$30 for 2 hours during season \$2.50 per half hour off season
Splashpad/Playground (Orange Pavilion)	\$2.50 per half hour off season

Cook Park

Item	Fee
Pavilion	\$15 for 2 hours, \$5 each additional hour
Pavilion with Kitchen	\$15 per hour + \$25 refundable key deposit

Ingleside Park

Item	Fee
Daily Pool Pass Adult	\$5
Daily Pool Pass Children	\$4
Season Pool Pass Adult	\$90
Season Pool Pass Family (up to 3 people)	\$200
Season Pool Pass Family Additional Member	\$25
Season Pool Pass Senior (55+)	\$80
Season Pool Pass Children (under 18)	\$80
Pool Party (up to 50 people)	\$40 per hour
Pool Party (additional 25 people)	\$15 flat fee
Pickleball Courts and Tennis Courts	\$0

Heritage Park

Item	Fee
Field	\$2.50 per half hour / \$15 per hour including lights
Pavilion	\$2.50 per half hour
Pavilion with Kitchen	\$15 per half hour + \$25 refundable key deposit



Parks & Recreation Department

Park Fee Schedules

Prof Powers Park

Item	Fee
Field	\$5 per hour / \$15 per hour including lights
Pavilion	\$2.50 per hour

Market Park

Item	Fee
Pavilion	\$15 for 2 hours, \$5 each additional hour

Fisher Field

Item	Fee
Field	\$5 per hour / \$15 per hour including lights

Eureka Trail

Item	Fee
Reservation Fee	\$25

Miscellaneous Fees

Item	Fee
Tournament Deposit	\$500 per day
Tournament Field Lights	\$15 per hour
Umpire Room Clean-up Fee (If left in unsanitary condition)	\$50 per incident
Turf / Facility Clean-up Fee (food/drink/gum/seeds/tobacco violations)	\$200 per incident
Soap Box Derby T-Shirt	\$12
Credit Card Convenience Fee	3%
Return Check Fee	\$45
Contact: Parks & Recreation Department 423-744-2704	

City Council Updated/Adopted on June 17, 2025



Agenda Item

IV. G. Bid Award for RFP 25-18 to Renovate Regional Park House into Parks & Recreation Offices.

Overview

The FY 2025-26 approved Capital Improvement Fund budget contains \$275,000 to prepare renovation plans and renovate the house at Regional Park into Parks & Recreation offices.

Design began during July 2025 to renovate the 2,310 sq.ft. house and garage, add an 18-vehicle paved parking area with proper drainage, comply with ADA requirements, replace structurally unsound retaining walls, waterproof the basement, and bring the residential building into compliance with current commercial building codes where required. Additional scope of items not included in the bid is the upgrade of the internet connection and internal security access controls. After the design was completed, bid documents were prepared and distributed. On the deadline date of December 18, 2025, eight bids were received. Three bids were disqualified due to not submitting required documents. Attached are the floor plan, site plan, rendering, bid tabulation sheet, and recommendation of award from the architects, Allen & Hoshall.

Based on the acceptable submitted bids, the lowest and most responsive bidder was GCE Construction (LaFollette, TN) with a bid of \$816,500 or \$353.46 per sq.ft. The architect and apparent qualified low bidder are preparing options to consider to reduce the cost of the project. Those options will be presented at the January 12, 2026 work session. One option could be to combine the lot where the house is with Regional Park in an effort to use existing parking spaces rather than construct 18 new ones saving about \$150,000 (see attached map). Lastly, some of the approved budget items could be redirected to fund this project including \$40,000 to repaint the five blue roofs at Regional Park, \$6,000 to replace the swimming pool slide at Ingleside Park, and \$125,000 to conduct repairs at the SE TN Trade & Conference Center for a total of \$171,000.

As an alternative to this excessive cost, the Parks & Recreation staff of four full-time employees could be located within the SE TN Trade & Conference Center with very minor renovations and using modular “cubicle” furniture as shown in the attached floor plan at an estimated cost of \$200,000. Another alternative would be just to have the Parks & Recreation Department remain at city hall and keep the Regional Park house as-is for storage and maintenance crew use.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Parks & Recreation



**PURCHASING DIVISION
BID TABULATION SHEET**

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT: PARKS & RECREATION

DATE BIDS ADVERTISED: Saturday, November 15, 2025

BID NUMBER: 25-18

DATE BIDS RECEIVED: Thursday, December 18, 2025

PROJECT NAME: REGIONAL PARK HOUSE REMODEL

BIDDER	STREET ADDRESS	CITY	COMPLIANCE?	(\$) BID AMOUNT
GCE Construction	5249 General Carl W Stiner HWY	LaFollette	Y	\$816,500
KTM Builders LLC	7625 Hamilton Park Dr, Ste 12	Chattanooga	Y	\$873,000
Chazler, Inc	104 Cedar Ln	Chattanooga	N	\$807,350
C&R Construction and Remodeling Inc	4989 Hwy 11S	Calhoun	N	\$468,156
Skilled Services	2800 Hoitt Ave	Knoxville	Y	\$862,600
Wilson Construction Group LLC	129 Lions Park Rd	Athens	Y	\$835,000
Eaton Construction Services, Inc	3145 Lakemoor View Rd	Knoxville	Y	\$1,002,000
Integrated Builds, LLC	1310 East End Avenue	Chattanooga	N	\$1,028,000



December 23, 2025

The Honorable Mr. Larry Eaton
Mayor of the City of Athens, TN
815 N. Jackson Street
Athens, TN 37303

RE: **Regional Park House Remodel
Recommendation of Contract Award**

Dear Mayor Eaton:

On December 18, 2025, Allen & Hoshall, Inc. received eight total bids for the Athens Regional Park House Remodel project. Five (5) of the eight bids appear to comply with the City's requirement for Specification Sections included in the Contract Documents. The bidders who included all of the requested information are listed below.

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Base Bid (with Allowances)</u>
1. GCE Construction	\$816,500.00
2. KTM Builders, LLC	\$873,000.00
3. Skilled Services	\$862,600.00
4. Wilson Construction Group, LLC	\$835,000.00
5. Eaton Construction Services, Inc	\$1,002,000.00

Review of Bids

Allen & Hoshall reviewed the bidder's proposals for qualifications, errors, omissions, acknowledgement of addenda, unbalancing of unit prices, mathematical extensions, and totals. There were no apparent mathematical errors in the GCE Construction bid proposal.

Apparent Low Bid

GCE Construction of La Follette, TN submitted the apparent low bid. The apparent low bidder provided the following documents as attachments to their proposal:

1. 5% Proposal Guarantee (with Attached Power of Attorney)
2. Terms & Conditions – Bid
3. Non-Collusion Affidavit of Prime Bidder
4. No Contact, No Advocacy Affidavit
5. Affidavit of Compliance with Drug-Free Workplace
6. Affidavit of Compliance, No Boycott of Israel

Review of Apparent Low Bidders Qualifications

Allen & Hoshall investigated the apparent low bidder's proposal and qualifications in the following manner:

1. Previous Projects: Reviewed lists of projects on hand, contract work underway, and contracts completed.
2. Bid Bond: Reviewed Bid Bond with accompanying Power of Attorney



3. Contractors License: Reviewed Contractor's Certification of License.
4. Subcontractors: Reviewed the licenses of the major subcontractors provided by Contractor.
5. Miscellaneous: Reviewed Terms and Conditions – Bid; Non-Collusion Affidavit of Prime Bidder; No Contact, No Advocacy Affidavit; Affidavit of Compliance with a Drug Free Workplace; Affidavit of Compliance with Non-Boycott of Israel

Recommendation:

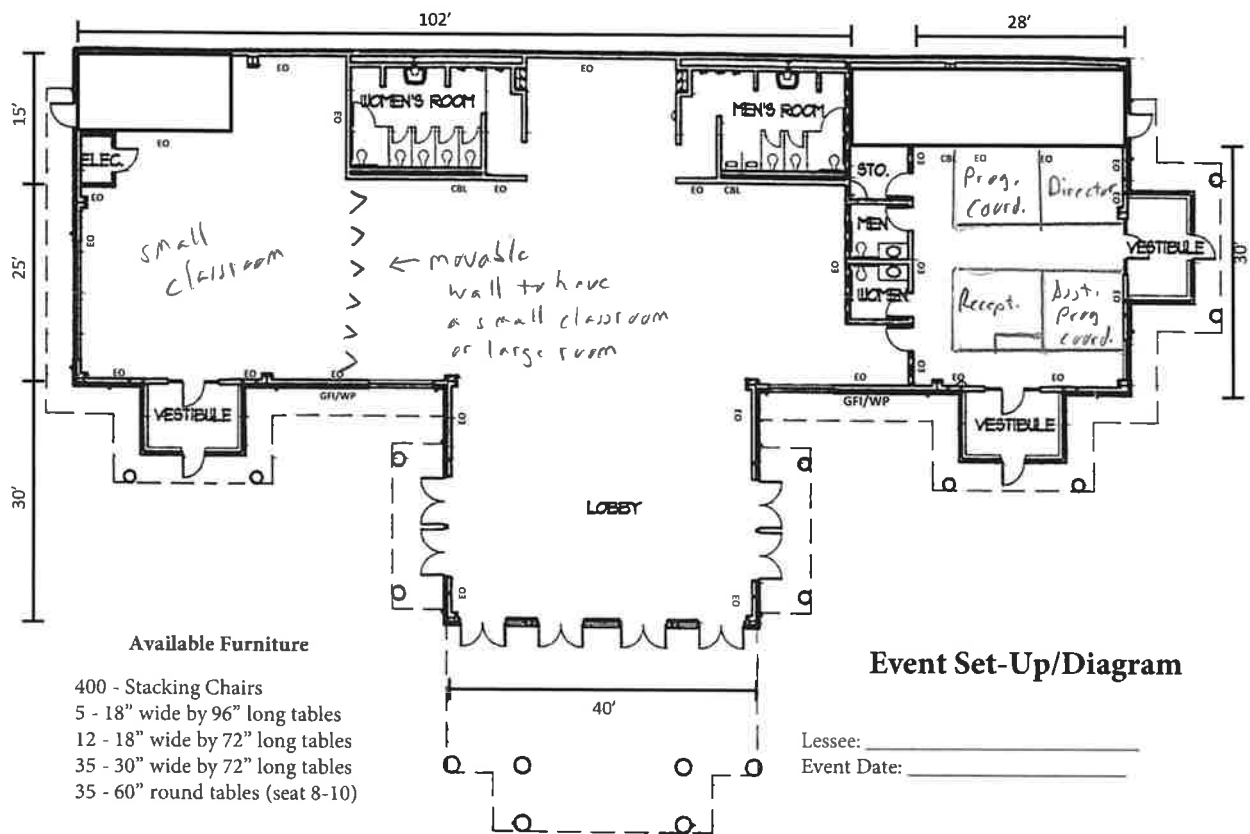
Our review and evaluation found that the apparent low bidder, GCE Construction, holds a current contractor's license in the State of Tennessee. It also appears that GCE is experienced in the type of work required by this project, and is in possession of sufficient financial resources to perform the work. Allen & Hoshall recommends that the City of Athens, TN accept the apparent low bidder's proposal and award the project with Base Bid amount for the Regional Park House Remodel Project to, GCE Construction. in the amount of \$816,500.00.

If you have any further questions, please contact me. Thank you.

Regards,
ALLEN & HOSHALL

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Thew, AIA".

Robert Thew, AIA
Associate





**Allen & Hoshall
Construction Documents**

next 3 pages...



Agenda Item

IV. H. Citizen Comment Rules

Overview

TCA 8-44-112 (attached) requires each governing body to reserve a period of time at each public meeting, that has actionable items, to hear public comments that are germane to the agenda for the meeting. The governing body may put reasonable restrictions on public comments such as time limits, number of speakers, advance sign up, etc.

City staff prepared and the city council approved a revised Citizen Comment Rules during the November 19, 2024 regular session (attached).

However, at a special-called meeting held on October 23, 2025, the Council discussed revising the Citizen Comment Rules and directed the City Manager and City Attorney to prepare a draft for review for the November 10, 2025 work session in which this discussion was postponed until the December 8, 2025 work session where it was reviewed and postponed again until the January 12, 2026 work session.

Based on comments from Council members, a revised document for consideration, Public Comment Rules & Decorum, is attached for consideration.

Note:

An ordinance amendment may be necessary to revise Chapter 1, 1-44 (Order of Business), if City Council combines the two comment periods.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

City Council



City Council

Citizen Comment Rules

Citizens may make comments at city council meetings where actionable items are on the agenda as required by state law, § 8-44-112. Two opportunities exist for citizens to comment during the meetings. 1) During **Citizens Comments Germane to the Agenda** when citizens may speak only to specific agenda items and 2) During **Citizens Comments** when citizens may speak on any subject the city has authority over.

The Public Comment Rules are set forth as follows:

1. Each speaker must give notice of their intent to speak by completing the **sign-in** form at the entrance of the Council Chambers prior to the commencement of the public meeting.
2. Each speaker is granted **three (3) minutes** to make their comments; time may not be yielded to others.
3. Time will begin after the speaker states their name and address, for the record. The Mayor may allow non-city residents to speak but is not compelled to do so.
4. Each speaker is expected to speak from the podium (not from the audience) in a civil, non-argumentative, and respectful manner. The speaker shall not be permitted to use any vulgar or obscene language.
5. Each speaker is expected to address their comments to the Mayor. The speaker shall not direct questions to the council members, staff, or audience. The speaker shall not refer to any person by name, make attacks or denigrate others.
6. The Mayor may acknowledge the comment has been heard. Neither council members nor staff shall address or respond to the speaker during the three (3) minute comment period.
7. The speaker may not address the Council on matters which are not under the authority of the Council, and which are regulated by other governmental bodies or agencies.
8. The speaker shall not speak to any previous or pending litigation unless it is on the agenda.
9. The Mayor may interrupt or call out of order anyone who breaks these rules. Any deviation from these rules will result in a warning without loss of time. If a speaker continues to violate these rules, they will be interrupted and shall lose the remaining time.

Disorderly Conduct or Disrupting a Public Meeting is Prohibited.

(Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-17-305 § 39-17-306)

Citizens are not required to attend a city council meeting to make a request or comment.



Proposed

Athens City Council

Public Comment Rules & Decorum

TCA 8-44-112 requires each governing body to reserve a period of time at each public meeting that has actionable items to hear public comments that are germane to the agenda for the meeting. During the designated time for Public Comments Germane to the Agenda, speakers may only talk about those items on the agenda and no others.

TCA 8-44-112 also allows the governing body to make certain rules that are intended to ensure public comments are heard in an orderly, respectful, and efficient manner. All public comments become part of the official city record and subject to disclosure. As a reminder, speakers may address the Council as a matter of legislative grace and not as a matter of right.

The Public Comment Rules & Decorum are set forth as follows:

1. Each speaker must give notice of their intent to speak by signing the form at the entrance of the Council Chambers prior to the commencement of the public meeting. Speakers who fail to sign in prior to the start of the meeting will not be recognized. Any speaker needing accommodation shall notify the office of the City Manager one (1) business day prior to the meeting.
2. Each speaker is granted five (5) minutes to make comments; time may not be transferred to others. The Chairperson may, at their discretion, shorten or extend the time limit for all speakers to accommodate the meeting agenda. Groups sharing a common position are required to appoint one spokesperson to avoid repetition. In order to provide for a diverse pool of comments, priority among those signing up shall be given to speakers who have not commented during the preceding two / three meetings.
3. Time will begin after the speaker states their name for the record. Speakers must reside in, own property in, or operate a business within the City of Athens. Other speakers may be permitted at the discretion of the Chairperson.
4. Speakers must address the Council from the podium using the attached microphone in a civil and orderly manner. Profanity, obscene language, or disruptive conduct are prohibited.
5. Speakers shall address their remarks to the Council as a whole, not to individual members, staff, or audience. Personal attacks, insults, or comments directed at specific individuals are prohibited.
6. Neither Council members nor staff shall discuss, comment or respond during the speaker's allotted time. Questions or comments may be addressed after the comment period at the Chairperson's discretion.
7. Speakers may not comment on matters which are not under the authority of the City Council nor pending or threatened litigation unless such matters appear on the agenda.
8. The Chairperson shall preserve order and decorum. Any violation of these rules shall result in one warning without loss of time. Continued violation shall result in forfeiture of remaining time. Disorderly conduct or disrupting a public meeting is prohibited and may result in removal pursuant to T.C.A. § 39-17-305 & T.C.A. § 39-17-306.

Individuals wishing to make comments are not required to attend a city council meeting. Comments may be submitted in writing to the office of the city manager or directly to elected officials.



Athens City Council

Public Comment Rules & Decorum

~~TCA 8-44-112 requires each governing body to reserve a period of time at each public meeting that has actionable items to hear public comments that are germane to the agenda for the meeting. During the designated time for Public Comments Germane to the Agenda, speakers may only talk about those items on the agenda and no others.~~

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7. Speakers may not comment on matters which are not under the authority of the City Council nor pending ~~or threatened~~ litigation unless such matters appear on the agenda.
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Individuals wishing to make comments are not required to attend a city council meeting. Comments may be submitted in writing to the office of the city manager or directly to elected officials.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-112

Reserved period for public comment — Reasonable restrictions allowed — Notice to public commenters — Applicability.

(a)

A governing body shall, for each public meeting, reserve a period for public comment to provide the public with the opportunity to comment on matters that are germane to the items on the agenda for the meeting.

(b)

The governing body may put reasonable restrictions on the period for public comment, such as the length of the period, the number of speakers, and the length of time that each speaker will be allowed to provide comment. The governing body may require a person to give notice in advance of the desire to offer comments at a meeting. The governing body shall take all practicable steps to ensure that opposing viewpoints are represented fairly, if any.

(c)

A notice for a public meeting shall indicate the manner in which a person may indicate the person's desire to provide public comment at the meeting.

(d)

This section does not apply to:

(1)

A meeting of a governing body, or a portion thereof, where the governing body is conducting a disciplinary hearing for a member of the governing body or a person whose profession or activities fall within the jurisdiction of the governing body; or

(2)

A meeting for which there are no actionable items on the agenda.

39-17-305. Disorderly conduct.

(a) A person commits an offense who, in a public place and with intent to cause public annoyance or alarm:

- (1)** Engages in fighting or in violent or threatening behavior;
- (2)** Refuses to obey an official order to disperse issued to maintain public safety in dangerous proximity to a fire, hazard or other emergency; or
- (3)** Creates a hazardous or physically offensive condition by any act that serves no legitimate purpose.

(b) A person also violates this section who makes unreasonable noise that prevents others from carrying on lawful activities.

(c) A violation of this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

History

Acts 1989, ch. 591, § 1.

[T.C.A. § 39-17-305 \(Lexis Advance through the 2024 Regular Session\)](#)

39-17-306. Disrupting meeting or procession.

(a) A person commits an offense if, with the intent to prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, procession, or gathering, the person substantially obstructs or interferes with the meeting, procession, or gathering by physical action or verbal utterance.

(b) A violation of this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

History

Acts 1989, ch. 591, § 1; 2020 (2nd Ex. Sess.), ch. 3, § 14.

[T.C.A. § 39-17-306 \(Lexis Advance through the 2024 Regular Session\)](#)



Agenda Item

IV. I. City Judge Application Review

Overview

During the November 18, 2025 regular session, Ordinance 1147 was considered on second reading. The ordinance proposed amending Title 3, *Municipal Court*, Chapter I, Section 3 of the City Code to remove the requirement that the City Judge be a resident of McMinn County.

Following the public hearing, Councilmember Sherlin moved to approve Ordinance 1147, with a second from Vice Mayor Curtis. The roll-call vote resulted in a tie, as a tie vote cannot carry a motion, the ordinance failed. Under Athens City Code §3-I CITY JUDGE (3-1)(3), this failure resulted in an immediate vacancy in the office of City Judge. Mitchell Bryant was appointed as judge pro tem (interim) during the November 18, 2025 regular session and took his oath of office on November 19th so municipal court operations could continue without interruption.

T.C.A. §16-18-312 governs the duration of an interim municipal judge appointment. While the statute technically applies, the City Attorney advised that because the Council is unlikely to complete the permanent appointment process within the statutory period, Council should review the interim appointment of Judge Bryant at the upcoming meeting and determine whether they wish to extend the interim appointment for an additional thirty (30) days. During the December 16, 2025 regular session, City Council voted to extend the appointment for interim City Judge Mitchell Bryant. By extending the appointment, it reset the statutory clock and allows the Council adequate time to complete the permanent appointment process.

To fill the vacancy, City Council set an application schedule to ensure all applicants meet the requirements of Athens City Code §3-I and applicable state laws, including residency in McMinn County and licensure to practice law in Tennessee.

- **Dec. 8, 2025 – Work Session:** Discuss process to appoint Municipal Judge
- **Dec. 16, 2025 – Regular Session:** Approve process for filling the vacancy
- **Dec. 17, 2025 – Jan. 7, 2026:** Advertise vacancy; accept applications
- **Jan. 12, 2026 – Work Session:** Review and discuss applicants
- **Jan. 20, 2026 – Regular Session:** Appoint qualified applicant/administer oath of office

Mitchell Bryant submitted the only application during the application period.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

City Council



Agenda Item

IV. J. Resolution 2026-04, A Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation for Emergency Rescue Equipment.

Overview

The City of Athens Fire Department is seeking City Council approval to submit a grant application to the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation. This grant program provides 100% funding with no local match requirement and allows requests of up to \$40,000.

The Fire Department is requesting \$39,312.58 to replace a 15-year-old set of Hurst hydraulic rescue tools. These tools are critical for vehicle extrication and other emergency rescue operations and are nearing the end of their service life.

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

Fire Department

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-04

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE FIREHOUSE SUBS PUBLIC SAFETY FOUNDATION FOR EMERGENCY RESCUE EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation provides grant funding to support the lifesaving capabilities of first responders and public safety organizations through the purchase of lifesaving equipment and prevention education tools; and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens Fire Department operates emergency rescue equipment that is approximately fifteen (15) years old and in need of replacement to ensure continued effective and safe emergency response; and

WHEREAS, the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation grant program provides funding at one hundred percent (100%) with no local match requirement, and eligible applicants may request up to Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00); and

WHEREAS, the City of Athens seeks to apply for grant funding in the amount of Thirty-Nine Thousand Three Hundred Twelve Dollars and Fifty-Eight Cents (\$39,312.58) to replace an aging set of Hurst hydraulic rescue tools; and

WHEREAS, the submission of this grant application requires formal approval from the Athens City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, TENNESSEE, THAT:

1. The Athens City Council hereby approves and authorizes the submission of a grant application to the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation in the amount of \$39,312.58 for the purpose of replacing a 15-year-old set of Hurst hydraulic rescue tools for the Athens Fire Department.
2. That the City acknowledges no matching funds are required for this grant application.
3. That the City Manager or designee is hereby authorized to execute all documents and take all actions necessary to complete and submit the grant application and, if awarded, to accept the grant funds on behalf of the City of Athens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption, the public welfare requiring it.

ON MOTION BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

Said Resolution adopted and approved by roll call vote on the **20th** day of **January, 2026**.

Larry Eaton, Mayor

Randall Dowling, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Christopher M. Caldwell, City Attorney



Agenda Item

IV. K. 2. i. Graffiti Ordinance

Overview

In October 2025 Vice Mayor Curtis requested MTAS guidance on potential ordinances addressing graffiti and public profanity. A response from MTAS Legal Consultant is below:

“Good morning,

*You have probably found the same code provisions/ordinances I have on graffiti:
<https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/system/files/mrln/mknowledge/main/Graffiti%20Ordinance.pdf>*

The ordinances all define graffiti as something not approved by the owner of the property. If the owner is in agreement, graffiti on their property may be abated under such provisions.

However, if the owner likes the graffiti and does not want it removed, I know of no authority for the city to force removal.

In my opinion, the city may not adopt and enforce an ordinance prohibiting profanity without liability. There is no legal definition for "profanity," but what is clear from case law is that one person's profanity is another person's free speech. In my opinion, there is no ordinance that may be enforced to address graffiti removal on properties where the owners approve of the graffiti, without the city facing free speech claims and liability.”

Action to Consider

none

Affected Departments

Community Development, Police, Public Works



Agenda Item

VI. A. Council Advisory Committee

Overview

Several City boards and committees continue to experience limited public interest and difficulty filling vacancies. In early December, the City published a social media post and an announcement on the City's website to inform citizens about available board and committee positions and to provide access to the application process for appointments made by the Mayor and/or City Council.

As a result of this outreach, three applications were received for the Council Advisory Committee:

1. Scott Mashburn (Vice Mayor Curtis)
2. Joe Kimbro (Councilmember Duggan)
3. Josh Goodman (Councilmember McCowan)

Committee Information

Term of Office: four (4) Years – coinciding with the term of office of the council members

Number of Members: twenty-five (25) until next election then it will be reduced to fifteen (15)

Appointed by: City Council

Meets: (Quarterly) January, April, July, & October at 6:00 p.m.

Location: Athens City Hall Conference Room

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

City Council



Agenda Item

VI. B. Athens Municipal Regional Planning Commission

Overview

Several City boards and committees continue to experience limited public interest and difficulty filling vacancies. In early December, the City published a social media post and an announcement on the City's website to inform citizens about available board and committee positions and to provide access to the application process for appointments made by the Mayor and/or City Council.

As a result of this outreach, one qualified application was received for the Athens Municipal Regional Planning Commission, a board with specific statutory qualification requirements for membership:

1. Ryan Droke (Urban Growth Boundary)

Commission Information

Term of Office: three (3) Years

Term Limit: four (4) consecutive terms or Twelve (12) consecutive years

Number of Members: seven (7) members

Appointed by: Mayor (except the council member – selected by city council)

Meets: Work Session: Last Monday of each month at 12:00 Noon

Regular Session: First Monday of each month at 12:00 Noon

Location: Athens City Hall

Action to Consider

Consensus is needed to move this item to the January 20, 2026 regular session for consideration.

Affected Departments

City Council