

Pocahontas City Council Meeting

Pocahontas City Hall
June 9, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Let the record show the city council meeting was called to order by Mayor Keith Futrell. City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Teel conducted a roll call.

Aldermen Present: Tim Scott, Nathan Camp, Danny Swann, Rob Olvey, Jamie Sullinger, Kerri King.

Public Comments: Pat Johnson announced that flyers for the Juneteenth Festival at the Eddie Mae Herron Center have been distributed. She invited the Mayor, City Council, and the public to attend the event this Saturday, noting that it's held earlier than usual this year due to another commitment on June 19.

Johnson also praised the Pocahontas Police Department for their professionalism during a recent family member's funeral, highlighting the well-organized traffic control and escort services.

Approval of May Financial Statements: Olvey moved to approve the May 2026 financial statements. Camp seconded the motion. All members present voted "Aye." **Motion carried.**

Approval of May 12 & May 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes. King moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2026, and May 26, 2026, City Council meetings, as amended. Council Member Scott seconded the motion. The City Clerk/Treasurer explained that the amendment corrected a clarification in the May 26, 2026, meeting minutes regarding an employee pay increase. The original draft incorrectly indicated that an employee in the Mayor's Office received a \$ 1.00-per-hour raise. The correction clarifies that the \$1.00-per-hour increase was for a Street Department employee who would be assisting in operating the automated trash truck. The Administrative Assistant in the Mayor's Office received a \$ 0.50-per-hour raise. The amendment was made to reflect the actions approved by the City Council accurately. Futrell called for any additional questions or comments. There being none, the motion was put to a vote. All members voted "Aye." **Motion carried**

Reports & Presentations

Chamber Report – John Plumley

Last month, three new members joined the Chamber, with more businesses anticipated soon.

The Chamber met with a manufacturer considering a move to Pocahontas but has no further details at this time.

Additionally, the Chamber facilitated five tourism visits, coordinated eight events and meeting rentals, and participated in meetings with the City Council, District Court, and the Northeast Arkansas Intermodal Authority.

Starting in August, the Chamber will host First Friday Coffee, sponsored by First Horizon Bank and Lighthouse Coffee, to provide networking opportunities. Local football coaches will be invited to discuss the upcoming season at the first event.

There were no questions from the Council about the report.

Airport Report – Chris Wheeler

Department Head Reports

Parks and Recreation Department Report

The mayor introduced Alison Cooper from Parks and Recreation to update the planning for the City's Fourth of July Celebration.

Cooper shared that about \$590 has been collected from vendor registrations and approximately \$700 from sponsorships and donations, with significant contributions from Riverside Kubota and Pocahontas Auto Body. The department is actively seeking additional sponsors and donations to cover remaining expenses.

The Tone Heads will perform and also will provide PA and sound services for \$750, bringing the combined cost for The Tone Heads and sound services to \$1,500. Council members supported this arrangement, citing its success at previous events.

Other preparations include:

Bounce houses and yard games, placing promotional banners around the city, and opening the park at 9:00 a.m. on July 4, with activities until the fireworks.

Cooper estimated that an additional \$600 to \$700 in sponsorships would be needed to fund the event fully. Council members suggested potential sponsors and highlighted the benefits of sponsorship recognition. Vendor fees are \$75 for food vendors and \$35 for retail vendors, who must obtain a city peddler's permit if needed. Preferred Home Health will provide a senior picnic area and complimentary food.

Cooper also noted that advertising efforts are showing positive results, with a 6% increase in K8 News viewership and a sold-out radio promotion on 87.9 The Bridge. She offered to provide detailed advertising analytics if requested.

Old Business

International Property Maintenance Code Discussion: The Council received an update regarding the ongoing review of the proposed International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). It was reported that the committee is continuing to conduct individual research and review of the code before making any recommendations. Committee members requested additional time to evaluate the code's provisions thoroughly and encouraged all Council members to review the information as well. It was noted that there is a significant amount of material to review and that the committee is still in the evaluation process. No action was taken on the matter. The mayor reminded that Danny Swann, Nathan Camp, and Kevin Dunham are serving on the committee reviewing the proposed code and encouraged anyone with questions to discuss them with the committee members.

Employee Handbook Review and Updates: The City Clerk updated the status of the review and revisions to the Employee Handbook. Teel reported that work is ongoing, focusing on updating language for clarity, consistency, and accuracy. The review committee will reconvene to continue discussing these revisions.

It was also mentioned that the Legislative Audit has begun its on-site review and that, if necessary, Teel will ask LEG whether the proposed handbook updates would meet compliance requirements. While the city is currently compliant, some wording needs clarification for accuracy.

Overman Annexation Update: Dunham with City Code Enforcement provided an Annexation Process Guide and Procedure Packet, created by James Walden of Garver Engineering, to clarify the annexation process. The packet was updated by Kevin Dunham and Michelle Teel, with additional input from Ben DeClerk, who is assisting Mr. Overman.

Mr. DeClerk has begun working through the steps outlined in the packet, which clarifies the responsibilities of the City and County during the annexation process. The updated guide helps the Planning and Zoning Commission review zoning requirements post-annexation and aims to improve communication between the City and County.

While formal adoption of the guide isn't necessary at this time, it serves as a more organized reference for applicants and officials. Similar informational packets could also benefit other City processes, such as street cut requests.

Mr. Overman updated the Council on his annexation request, stating he plans to include an additional 2 acres for a pump station, raising the total to approximately 91 acres. He will revise the legal description accordingly and complete required septic, water, and drainage plans during the anticipated two-month review process.

A special-called Council meeting may be scheduled as needed as the annexation progresses.

Brown Shoe Building Update: City Attorney Grider provided an update regarding the ongoing case involving the former Brown Shoe Building. Grider reported that the appeal hearing in Randolph County Circuit Court is scheduled for July 2. He explained that the property owners previously pleaded guilty in District Court to violations of the City's nuisance ordinance and were assessed approximately \$20,800 in fines based on the duration the property remained in violation. The owners subsequently appealed the case to the Circuit Court, where it will be heard De novo, meaning it will be tried as though no prior judgment had been entered.

Grider reported that since the appeal was filed, the property owners have completed many of the corrective actions requested by the City, including mowing the property, repairing portions of the roof, and addressing several conditions that resulted in the original citation. While the building remains in poor condition, it no longer contains many of the conditions that constituted violations of the City's nuisance ordinance.

Grider explained that the City's primary objective in nuisance enforcement cases is to achieve compliance rather than collect fines. Because the owners have substantially corrected the cited violations, he requested the Council's direction on whether to proceed with the Circuit Court hearing or seek dismissal of the case. He noted that if the City proceeded with the hearing, the Court could still dismiss the case based on the property's current condition.

The Council discussed the condition of the building, including concerns about asbestos, structural integrity, and the property's long-term appearance. It was noted that previous efforts by City officials to obtain assistance from state agencies regarding asbestos abatement had been unsuccessful.

The mayor reiterated that the city does not own the Brown Shoe Building, emphasizing that this remains a common misconception within the community. He stated that if the City owned the property, it would have already addressed the issue. The mayor further explained that the City had previously attempted to acquire the property through negotiations with the owners and had explored the possibility of obtaining a 100% state grant for demolition if the property could be acquired. However, negotiations were unsuccessful because the parties could not reach an agreement.

Council members discussed the City's legal limitations regarding condemnation and demolition of privately owned structures. Mr. Grider explained that pursuing condemnation would likely require obtaining a search warrant, hiring a structural engineer, and completing additional inspections and evaluations, all of which would involve significant expense. He noted that while condemnation remains an option, substantial evidence would be required to demonstrate that the building is structurally unsafe.

The Council also discussed whether portions of the proposed International Property Maintenance Code or an ordinance addressing abandoned buildings could provide additional enforcement options in the future. Committee members reviewing the International Property Maintenance Code agreed to continue evaluating whether provisions of the code could assist the City in addressing similar properties while ensuring any future ordinance would apply fairly throughout the community.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Council requested additional information regarding:

- The City's abandoned building ordinance previously reviewed;
- Potential costs associated with hiring a structural engineer to evaluate the building; and
- Possible legal options available should future enforcement become necessary.

Camp agreed to provide Kevin Dunham with contact information for structural engineers to support additional research.

Olvey moved to table further discussion of the Brown Shoe Building until the July Council meeting to allow additional research into engineering costs and abandoned-building regulations. Swann seconded the motion, all voting aye. **Motion passed to Table.**

Christmas Lights: The Council discussed the City's annual Christmas light display and the costs of leasing versus purchasing holiday decorations. The vision, initially initiated by the late Mayor Keith Sutton, has made the display a cherished community attraction, with the Parks and Recreation Department managing installation and maintenance.

The Council reviewed pricing examples, noting that many donors mistakenly believed their contributions were for purchasing decorations, while most are leased due to high costs. The annual lease expense ranges from \$24,000 to \$25,000, with a percentage covered by donations.

Purchasing decorations would require a significant investment—approximately \$44,000 to \$50,000 for a complete package—along with additional responsibilities for storage, maintenance, and repairs. Currently, leasing includes setup and takedown, which reduces costs for the city.

Several Council members supported gradually purchasing decorations, suggesting that long-term ownership could encourage more donor contributions. The display has become a regional attraction, and the Council agreed to revisit the discussion later this year as the holiday season approaches. No action was taken at this time.

New Business

Resolution FAA Grant Assistance for Runway Rehabilitation and Runway Safety Area Improvements: a resolution authorizing the City to seek grant assistance through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) for runway rehabilitation and runway safety area improvements at the Pocahontas Municipal Airport was presented. The proposed project is estimated to cost \$171,802, with the FAA providing 95% funding through the Airport Improvement Program. The City's local share of the project would be approximately \$8,408. Futrell also noted that the Airport Commission has applied for an additional FAA grant of approximately \$265,000, which is anticipated to be awarded later in the year.

A motion was made by Olvey and seconded by Camp to read Resolution No. 20-2026. Following the reading of the resolution, a motion was made by Olvey and seconded by Scott to adopt the resolution. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote:

- Tim Scott – **Yes**
- Nathan Camp – **Yes**
- Danny Swann – **Yes**
- Rob Olvey – **Yes**
- Jamey Sullinger – **Yes**
- Kerri King – **Yes**

Motion carried unanimously. This is **Resolution No. 20-2026.**

Futrell thanked the Council for its continued support of the Pocahontas Municipal Airport and Airport Commission. He noted the airport remains active, praised the Airport Commission, staff, and Jeremy's crew for maintaining the facility, and shared that visiting pilots described the airport as one of the nicest they had visited. He added that continued Council support helps strengthen this valuable community asset.

East Pocahontas Warehouse Building Improvements: Mayor Futrell discussed proposed improvements to the city-owned warehouse in East Pocahontas to make it more marketable for future tenants. The Council reviewed an estimate of approximately \$56,000 to install a concrete floor and discussed additional improvements, including an overhead door, an entry door, and LED lighting. Mayor Futrell stated the improvements could increase the building's rental value and provide long-term revenue for the city. Grider advised that a resolution to waive competitive bidding would be required before proceeding. Camp moved to direct Grider to prepare the necessary resolution for consideration at a future meeting. Olvey seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

School Resource Officer (SRO) Program: The Council discussed the upcoming renewal of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement with the Pocahontas School District. Grider recommended beginning discussions with the School District about the program's future, citing administrative and operational issues that have arisen as the program has grown. He emphasized that the discussion was not a reflection of the SRO program itself, which remains valuable, but rather an opportunity to evaluate whether the current structure remains the best option.

Council members discussed the possibility of the School District eventually operating its own police department or continuing the existing agreement with modifications. It was noted that the School District currently reimburses the city for the officers' salaries and benefits, totaling approximately \$17,966.72 per month for three SROs.

The Council agreed that discussions should begin well in advance of the agreement's renewal. A committee of Olvey, Camp, and Futrell was

appointed to meet with Dr. Arbuckle to discuss potential options and report back to the Council.

Mayor's Comments: Mayor Futrell reported that the City continues to maintain the former Alma Spikes School property for public use at the request of the Pocahontas School District. Because the City does not own the property, no permanent improvements are planned. The Council discussed the possibility of formalizing the maintenance arrangement through an MOU.

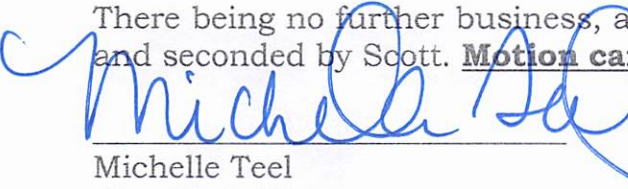
Futrell updated the Council on bond-funded projects, reporting approximately \$3.98 million has been expended to date for street resurfacing, traffic signal improvements, and the Baltz Lake project. He reminded the Council that bond funds must be allocated by November 2026 and noted that street striping will be completed on recently resurfaced roads.

He also reported that additional "No Through Truck" signs have been installed to discourage commercial truck traffic on Everett Street, and that the City continues to work to correct GPS routing issues.

The mayor announced that several City officials will attend the Arkansas Municipal League Summer Conference and reported that the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission plans to stock Baltz Lake with approximately 30,000 brim, 25,000 catfish, and 25,000 bass. The Council briefly discussed possible improvements to the lake area. Futrell also stated he would contact Dr. Arbuckle to begin discussions regarding the future of the School Resource Officer (SRO) program.

There being no further business, Rob Olvey moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Olvey and seconded by Scott. **Motion carried.**


Michelle Teel
City Clerk/Treasurer


Keith Futrell
Mayor



Miss Goldsmith

