

Pocahontas City Council Meeting

Pocahontas City Hall
February 10, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Futrell called the meeting to order. City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Teel conducted roll call.

Aldermen: Present:

Tim Scott, Nathan Camp, Danny Swann, Rob Olvey, Jamey Sullinger

Absent: Kerri King

Public Comments: None

Approval of Financials and Minutes

Camp moved to approve the January 2026 financials, seconded by Sullinger; all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Olvey moved to approve the January 2026 minutes, seconded by Camp; all voted in favor. Motion carried.

Chamber of Commerce – Ann Savage

- Website and membership directory transitioning to ChamberMate for improved functionality.
- Co-sponsored MLK Day event with Eddie Mae Herron Center.
- Membership drive goal: 250 members for the 250th celebration.
- Launching Business & Sports Hall of Fame (nominations open September; awards at annual banquet).
- Continuing “Everything Chamber” training series.
- Podcast launched (five interviews recorded; weekly releases).
- AG Expo: February 20 at Clover Bend Historic District.
- MOU signing between Black River Technical College and Williams Baptist University scheduled for February 17 at Manly Chapel.

Department Heads

Parks & Recreation – Aquatic Center

The Aquatic Center currently incurs approximately 3% in chargebacks and pays an average credit card fee of 4.23%. Staff proposed switching to Swipe, reducing fees to approximately 3.2%.

Options discussed:

- Adding a 3% service fee for card users with signage; or
- Adjusting pricing structure.

Projected 2025 credit card volume: \$98,991.41.

Discussion included concerns about split pricing, administrative savings from netted deposits, and fee recovery. Consensus favored moving toward a system that recoups fees and reduces staff time.

Parks & Recreation – Aquatic Center

Heater parts have arrived after shipping delays; installation is being coordinated.

Old Business**Firefighter Step Pay Proposal**

Chief Baltz presented a step pay system for full-time firefighters based on longevity and certifications. The proposal does not apply to volunteers or rural per-call pay.

Discussion addressed increased call volume (particularly medical), cost impacts, and benefits analysis. A two-year phased implementation was proposed to ease the budget impact.

Camp moved to prepare an ordinance establishing the new pay structure, seconded by Olvey; all voted in favor. Motion carried.

The City Attorney will prepare the ordinance for a special meeting at City Hall on February 18, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Trammel Street Right-of-Way

Grider reported the plan to transfer ownership via a quitclaim deed from the Cagle family and others. A separate agreement with Josh Bettis will address required improvements before street acceptance.

Annexation – 53 Acres

An amended petition was filed, changing the process to 100% owner-consent annexation. Documentation has been submitted to the County Clerk and Tax Collector; the next step is County Judge review.

911 Agreement – Payment Schedule

Due to a slight increase approved in the current budget, the city will pay \$5,300 per month for 10 months (instead of \$4,250.00 for 12 months).

Camp moved to approve the 10-month payment schedule; seconded by Olvey. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Minimum Habitability Standards – Rental Housing

Discussion addressed enforcement challenges for state habitability standards and recurring heating issues. Council discussed reviewing ordinances from other cities and potentially forming a committee. Dunham will gather information for presentation in March.

Riverfront Park Property Transfer

Mayor Futrell reported the need to transfer the property into the city's name to qualify for grants. He is on the agenda and will address the quorum court regarding the transfer.

Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance

Dunham reported revisions prepared with James Walden (Garver) to align the ordinance with state standards while protecting residents. Proposed removal of Section 9.16.02(A)(1)&(2), and related C-1 zone language.

Camp moved to proceed with preparing a revised ordinance for March consideration; seconded by Scott. All in favor. Motion carried.

Grease Trap Ordinance

Update provided by Pocahontas Water & Sewer. Tabled until March due to weather delays.

Lease Committee Update

- J.R. Rogers' lease not renewing; vacating by March.
 - Pinnacle/Magee Building & Carter Cox - Awaiting paint quote per council request.
 - Black River Commodities lease expires October 2026; proposed rent increase and maintenance stipulations under discussion.
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New Business**Park Matching Grant**

Grider and Teel are locating prior resolutions and preparing any required documentation to accept grant funds.

Ordinance – Dilapidated Buildings

Dunham and Grider will finalize a code enforcement ordinance for presentation at a future meeting.

Gage Glisson Property Purchase

Property near shooting range appraised at \$5,000.

Camp moved to enter into a contract for the 1.7-acre m/l property at \$5,000 plus survey cost. Roll call vote: all present voted in favor; King was absent. Motion carried.

State of the City – Mayor Futrell

Pursuant to the requirements for a mayor of a city of the first class, Futrell delivered the annual State of the City Address to the City Council and citizens in attendance.

Mayor Futrell began by noting that the City of Pocahontas is in a fortunate position compared to many other municipalities. He emphasized his continued pride in the City's department heads and employees, recognizing their dedication and service to the community. He highlighted the City's coordinated response to the recent winter storm. With advance notice from forecasters, all departments—including Street, Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation—took proactive measures to prepare. The mayor reported: Snow accumulation began early Saturday morning. By 6:00 a.m., the Street Department, Police Department, and city leadership were actively responding. Crews worked extended hours through the following Thursday. The operational plan focused

on keeping streets cleared ahead of sanitation routes, which proved successful. Crews also returned to assist elderly residents and those unable to clear snow windrows created by plowing operations.

Mayor Futrell noted that residents traveling to neighboring communities complimented Pocahontas' street conditions and the efforts of state and county partners. He commended the city workforce for exceptional performance during the storm.

City Employment and Operations - For 2025, the City Clerk/Treasurer's Office issued 179 W-2 forms, representing approximately 69 full-time employees, Seasonal and part-time personnel, with a Total workforce of 179 individuals.

Mayor Futrell noted that the city operates as a significant local enterprise, managing a \$15 million annual budget, approximately \$12 million in expenditures, and remains financially sound.

Financial Performance - The mayor reported strong financial growth over the past year, with higher revenues than in the prior year, including tax collections and related income, and noted that investment earnings generated over \$146,000 in interest income. Combined, these increases represent a very strong positive financial impact on the City.

Baltz Lake Project - The Baltz Lake project was completed in October at a final cost of approximately \$582,000, falling below the initial projected estimate of \$625,000 and under the revised \$600,000 target. The mayor noted that unusually dry fall and winter conditions have limited water accumulation and expressed hope for additional rainfall to benefit the area.

Street Improvements -Using bond funds, the City has completed significant paving projects totaling approximately \$1.2 million. Several miles of city streets have been improved, with additional paving scheduled as seasonal conditions permit. Planned upcoming projects include additional street paving, sidewalk improvements, and concrete infrastructure projects, all to be funded through existing bond allocations.

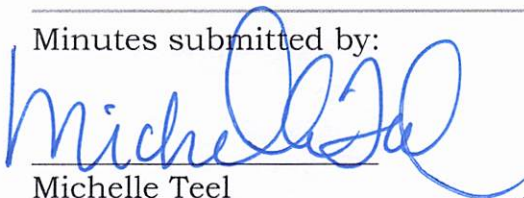
Traffic Signal Project - The traffic signal upgrade project currently totals approximately \$762,000 and includes six (6) traffic lights located along Arkansas State Highways within city limits. Although the signals are on state highways, ownership and maintenance responsibility remain with the city. Futrell reported that the Arkansas Municipal League and the Mayor's Association are advocating for the state to assume these costs in the future for cities with populations under 25,000. While the change may not impact this project, it could benefit municipalities in the future.

Mayor Futrell reiterated that all actions and projects undertaken by the Council and administration are intended to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Pocahontas. He encouraged residents to contact his office with questions or concerns, stating that calls will be returned and in-person visits are welcome.

A council member publicly recognized and expressed appreciation for Mayor Futrell's personal involvement and for their leadership during the snowstorm response, noting that he and Scott Baltz worked hand-in-hand for extended hours, operated equipment, and assisted residents directly, in addition to overseeing operations. The mayor concluded his remarks and moved to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn made by Scott and seconded by Camp; all approved.

Minutes submitted by:



Michelle Teel
City Clerk/Treasurer



Keith Futrell
Mayor

