TOWN OF LOUISVILLE, TENNESSEE
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

December 9, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Present: Jill Pugh - Mayor, Daniel Franklin - Vice Mayor, Steven Kelley - Alderman, Lysia Vaught - Alderman, John Loope - Alderman

Absent: None

Others Present: Caleb Wheeler - Town Recorder, Hailey Russell - Administrative Assistant, Debbie Walsh - BMA Assistant, Barry Ottinger - Building & Codes Official, Roger Bird - Town Engineer, Don & Julie Tefeteller - Town Accountants, & 34 citizens

Mayor Pugh called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Vice Mayor Franklin led the invocation.

Mayor Pugh led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Pugh presented the minutes from the November 10, 2025, Public Hearing.

MOTION by Vice Mayor Franklin to approve the November 10, 2025 public hearing minutes. Second by Alderman Kelley. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. **MOTION PASSES.**

Mayor Pugh presented the minutes from the November 10, 2025, regular scheduled meeting.

Vice Mayor Franklin stated that the meeting minutes from the October 14, 2025, meeting were not uploaded to the website and advised Russell to correct that. Franklin also stated that on page 12 of the November 10, 2025 meeting minutes he addressed a question to Town Recorder Caleb Wheeler asking if the check for PRI of East Tennessee, INC. has been paid yet or not. Wheeler replied that yes it has already been paid. Franklin wanted that interaction recorded in the minutes.

MOTION by Vice Mayor Franklin to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2025, regular meeting as amended. Second by Alderman Vaught. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. **MOTION PASSES.**

Mayor's Report

Mayor Pugh reported that the Town's Building Official has resigned. The position was posted, and one applicant, Darren Stinnett, applied. Mr. Stinnett previously worked for the City of Alcoa, assisting with inspections and working closely with the Building Official. He has 28 years of public service experience and extensive municipal experience.

Mr. Stinnett does not live in Louisville but resides in Knoxville and has ties to the Town through his daughter's business, *Louisville Nutrition*. He is working toward obtaining the required credentials. In the interim, the current Building Official, Barry, will work with him under Barry's license. Mr. Stinnett prefers to work on a part-time, hourly basis and could begin work on January 5, 2026.

Mayor Pugh stated that qualified Building Officials are difficult to find and expressed confidence that Mr. Stinnett would be a good candidate.

Mayor Pugh also announced that Town offices will be closed December 24, 2025, through January 1, 2026. Non-Emergency issues may be reported to Blount County at 865-983-3620. She concluded by noting favorable weather and strong attendance at a recent Town event.

Vice Mayor Franklin asked how long Barry would remain employed once Mr. Stinnett began working and how the change would impact the Town's budget. Mayor Pugh responded that Barry would continue working until Mr. Stinnett is comfortable operating independently and has passed the required state tests. She stated that Barry would transition to a part-time, hourly position and would no longer be salaried. Mayor Pugh added that she would work with Town Recorder Caleb Wheeler to adjust the budget accordingly.

Staff Reports: Building & Codes, Streets, Administrative

There were no staff reports at this time.

BMA Representatives Reports for Board and Committees

There were no reports at this time.

Response to Public Comment/Input from Previous Meeting

There were no responses to public comment/input from the previous meeting.

Public Comment on Agenda Items (5 Minute Limit)

Doug Moore spoke as a citizen regarding the placement of stop signs on a roadway curve. He stated that the stop signs have been in place for approximately one year and expressed concern that they are located where there is no intersection, which he believes creates confusion and a potential safety hazard, particularly for visitors unfamiliar with the area. Mr. Moore questioned whether a traffic study had been conducted prior to installation and suggested that alternative warning measures, such as curve or warning signage, would be more appropriate. He urged the Board to reconsider the placement of the stop signs.

Anna Gibson spoke regarding actions taken at the November Planning Commission meeting. She stated that a development which had previously been denied was approved at that meeting.

Ms. Gibson expressed concern over what she described as personal attacks directed toward Town Planner Jordan Rockwell and another individual during the meeting. She further objected to allegations made by a Planning Commission member that Sunshine Law violations had occurred, stating that she reviewed related emails and did not believe any violations took place. She noted that she believed the Sunshine Law did not apply to Mr. Rockwell. Ms. Gibson also expressed concern that the Town's attorney was not present at the meeting, despite her prior request for legal counsel to attend, and stated that the developer's attorney was present. She further stated that she believed ethical complaints she had raised earlier had not been addressed and expressed dissatisfaction with what she described as inappropriate conduct during the meeting. She concluded by stating she felt the situation was unfair to the individuals involved.

Financial Report

Caleb Wheeler reviewed the November 2025 financial report.

MOTION by Alderman Kelley to approve the November 2025 financial report. Second by Vice Mayor Franklin. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. **MOTION PASSES.**

Old Business

a. Discussion to Remove the Stop Signs Located on Old Lowes Ferry Road

Mayor Pugh addressed the discussion regarding the possible removal of the stop signs located on Old Lowes Ferry Road. She stated that the Board had previously discussed the accident history on the roadway and that crash reports had since been obtained and were available for review. Mayor Pugh noted that when the issue was reviewed the prior year, a total of 14 accidents since 2020 were identified on Old Lowes Ferry Road. Of those, three occurred in 2020, four in 2023, and two in 2024 in the area of concern. She added that Board members reviewed the 14 reports last December but were not aware at that time of the exact locations of the accidents along Old Lowes Ferry Road. Mayor Pugh stated that this information was provided to assist the Board in determining how to proceed and noted that alternatives to stop signs could be considered. She then asked if there was further discussion on the matter.

Alderman Loope stated that he was not an advocate for the stop signs and reviewed several of the accident reports related to the area. He noted that many of the accidents appeared to have occurred while vehicles were navigating the curve, including incidents involving vehicles striking trees, guardrails, or leaving the roadway. He stated that some reports involved sign or guardrail impacts and that the accidents appeared to be related to roadway conditions rather than an intersection. Alderman Loope suggested that the accident data indicated the curve itself was a contributing factor. Alderman Loope asked Mr. Moore to share his thoughts on the stop signs based on his experience. Mr. Moore stated that he was speaking solely as a citizen and expressed concern that the stop signs had not improved safety. He stated that the stop signs appear unexpectedly to drivers unfamiliar with the roadway and may contribute to sudden stopping. Mr. Moore noted that many accidents in the area involve vehicles striking guardrails or trees and suggested that alternative safety measures be considered instead of stop signs. Alderman Loope concluded by stating that the Board had made an effort to improve public safety and prevent accidents. He noted that not all risks can be eliminated, particularly given the nature of the roadway curve, and stated that he was uncertain what additional measures could be taken beyond those already considered.

Town Engineer Roger Bird reported that, following direction from the previous meeting, he reviewed the possibility of using speed cameras. He stated that after consulting with vendors and reviewing Tennessee legislation, speed cameras are not permitted for use in this situation and therefore would not be an available option for the Town.

Mayor Pugh stated that County Commissioner David Wells and TDOT had received multiple calls regarding the stop signs. She noted that, other than having a professional traffic engineering firm review the roadway, few alternatives were available and that traffic-calming measures such as speed humps could negatively impact emergency response on the collector road. Mayor Pugh added that there are similar roads throughout the Town, Dug Gap Road was used as an example, which serves as a major cut-through with heavier traffic and multiple blind curves near driveways. She stated that while these conditions are hazardous, they are not issues the Town can easily resolve.

Vice Mayor Franklin stated that he had requested the item be placed on the agenda to consider soliciting bids for traffic-calming humps in order to evaluate cost and effectiveness. He noted that he had previously discussed this option with the County Engineer and recalled an estimated cost of approximately $10,000 based on information received the prior year. He stated that, due to the potential impact on emergency vehicles, he believed a professional traffic or transportation study would be appropriate before making a decision, particularly given that the roadway is a collector road serving many homes. Vice Mayor Franklin expressed concern that removing the stop signs would result in increased speeding and potentially more severe accidents. He stated that the stop signs were originally installed in response to concerns raised by residents, including individuals who had been involved in accidents and experienced property damage or personal injury. He noted that the Board reviewed multiple traffic-calming options at that time and determined the stop signs were an appropriate initial measure to slow traffic. He stated that, while the placement of the stop signs may appear unusual, they have reduced vehicle speeds. Vice Mayor Franklin shared a recent personal observation illustrating the safety concerns on the roadway and emphasized that speeding remains an issue despite existing signage, flashing lights, and speed limit postings. He concluded by stating that the intent of the stop signs was to improve safety and that additional measures, such as traffic-calming humps, could be considered as part of a broader solution.

Mayor Pugh stated that she was not opposed to taking action regarding the roadway but emphasized the importance of obtaining a professional opinion from a qualified traffic or road engineer. She expressed concern that the Town had acted without a formal traffic study and stated that relying on a professional recommendation would reduce risk to the Town. Mayor Pugh acknowledged that the current measures are not recommended by TDOT and that TDOT has communicated this to the Town. She noted that while a traffic engineer may recommend costly roadway improvements, the Town's limited financial resources and other infrastructure needs must be considered when evaluating any recommendations.

MOTION by Vice Mayor Franklin to contact three engineering groups for a road study. Second by Alderman Kelley. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. **MOTION PASSES.**

b. Discussion of the Recommendation from the Recreation Advisory Board for the Disc Golf Course

Hailey Russell advised the Board of the Recreation Advisory Board's recommendation regarding the proposed disc golf course. She stated that the project could be completed in two phases, with Phase 1 consisting of the course design and Phase 2 consisting of implementation at a later date. Ms. Russell reported that she had spoken with Will, Prodigy Disc, regarding the project and that he would be providing an updated quote to reflect a 9-hole master plan, with the course played twice to create an 18-hole experience. She noted that the revised quote is expected to be lower than the original estimate, which was based on 18 holes. Ms. Russell stated that the purchase of disc golf baskets would not be required during the design phase and could be deferred until implementation. She also reported that tee pad options include either concrete or turf, with turf included in the previous quote and concrete to be considered in the updated estimate. Ms. Russell further advised that a Knoxville disc golf community group has expressed interest in volunteering to assist with course implementation, which would take approximately two to three months, provided the course location is finalized. She stated that the primary outstanding issue is determining the final course layout and location on the property. Ms. Russell noted that the Recreation Advisory Board supports moving forward with the project in phases, pending receipt of the updated quote and clarification of the course location.

Bill Mattison stated that the Recreation Advisory Board supported moving the disc golf project forward by completing the design phase first. He noted that the master plan drawing is conceptual and generally shows the course beginning near the downhill side of the walking trail and continuing through the wooded area. Mr. Mattison stated that the primary issue is confirming the exact course location so the designer can proceed, noting that the proposed area overlaps with existing maintenance and storage areas that would need to be avoided or addressed. He added that once the design is finalized, the project could move forward to implementation when the Town is ready.

Vice Mayor Franklin stated that, based on his recollection of the master plan, the back area of the property was reserved for future use. He suggested that, to avoid conflicts with the maintenance area, the disc golf course could be shifted to the area designated for future use.

MOTION by Vice Mayor Franklin to move forward with the recommendation from the Recreation Advisory Board. Second by Alderman Vaught. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. **MOTION PASSES.**

c. **AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF LOUISVILLE, TENNESSEE TO ADOPT THE UPDATED ZONING ORDINANCE AND TO REPEAL ALL PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH**

Mayor Pugh presented the ordinance to the board and asked if there were any questions or concerns.

Vice Mayor Franklin pointed out a few spelling errors and typos that he asked to be corrected before the final reading.

MOTION by Vice Mayor Franklin to approve on the first reading with the corrections. Second by Alderman Kelley. ROLL CALL VOTE: Pugh – Aye, Franklin – Aye, Kelley – Aye, Vaught – Aye, Loope – Aye. **MOTION PASSES.**

d. **A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF LOUISVILLE, TENNESSEE TO SECURE AN EXPERIENCED AND QUALIFIED ENGINEERING FIRM TO ASSIST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOURISM ENHANCEMENT GRANT**

Town Engineer Roger Bird addressed the proposed resolution to hire a qualified engineering group for the Tourism Enhancement Grant project. He stated that after reviewing correspondence and consulting with TVA, it became clear that the scope of required permits and approvals for the campsite project including campsites, bathhouse, shoreline work, and other amenities was extensive and beyond what Town staff could reasonably complete without professional assistance. He noted that TVA requires professionally prepared drawings and comprehensive plans for approval, rather than simple permit templates. Mr. Bird reported that he discussed the scope of services with the engineering firm and participated in a conference call to clarify what services would be provided. He stated that the firm advised against the Town attempting to complete only part of the work independently, noting that other municipalities have encountered difficulties due to regulatory complexity. He further explained that TVA approvals can take up to six months and that the project timeline requires advance planning to meet grant deadlines. Based on these considerations, Mr. Bird stated that he would recommend hiring the engineering firm to manage the permitting and design process to ensure compliance and timely project completion.

Mayor Pugh stated that, based on her discussions with TVA, permits associated with the project would be valid for several years, approximately five years. She explained that obtaining comprehensive permits now would allow the Town to pursue future phases of the master plan without having to repeat the permitting process, which is beyond the Town's capacity to complete independently. She noted that while not every item must be constructed immediately, having permits in place would position the Town to move forward efficiently if additional grant funding becomes available. Mayor Pugh stated that TVA has advised that permits are required for any work on the site.

Town Engineer Roger Bird added that TVA's permitting process requires detailed information regarding ground disturbance, equipment use, environmental and archaeological impacts, and professionally prepared drawings. He stated that attempting to manage all required approvals without professional assistance would likely result in delays of several months and could jeopardize grant funding due to timeline constraints. Mr. Bird reiterated that hiring an engineering firm would help ensure compliance and timely progress.

Alderman Vaught asked about the time constraints associated with the grant. Mayor Pugh responded that quarterly progress reports are required and that the Town generally has up to two years to complete the project, with possible extensions if progress is being made. She added that unused grants returned by municipalities can negatively impact future funding opportunities.

Mr. Bird further stated that the materials provided by the engineering firm included detailed topographical, utility, and design information that Town staff is not equipped to produce independently. He emphasized that TVA requires supporting drawings for approval and that simplified plans would not be sufficient.

Vice Mayor Franklin stated that after reviewing the updated scope of work, he now had a clearer understanding of what services were included in the proposed fee, including full permitting and design services. He noted that earlier confusion stemmed from the lack of clarity regarding the scope. He confirmed that the Town's total financial commitment remains $100,000, inclusive of engineering costs.

Vice Mayor Franklin raised concerns regarding the use of cross ties to delineate campsites, citing potential maintenance and safety issues. Mayor Pugh responded that similar designs are used in state parks, with gravel interiors to reduce mowing and maintenance needs, and stated that cross ties function as parking pads. Vice Mayor Franklin also asked about the location of the proposed fishing pier and whether it would impact the existing concrete boat ramp. Mr. Bird stated that the plan calls for a prefabricated fishing pier to be located adjacent to the existing ramp. Mayor Pugh stated that pier placement and related concerns could be addressed during the design phase.

MOTION by Vice Mayor Franklin to approve the resolution to hire Kimley-Horn to assist in the implementation of the tourism enhancement grant. Second by Alderman Kelley. VOTE: AYE: Pugh, Franklin, Kelley, Vaught. NO: Loope. **MOTION PASSES.**

<u>New Business</u>

a. Discussion of November's Planning Commission Meeting

Alderman Loope stated that he had reflected on the November Planning Commission meeting and expressed that, based on his experience, he was disappointed with how the meeting was conducted. He stated that, for the first time in his many years of service, he felt embarrassed for the Town.

Vice Mayor Franklin stated that he was unable to attend the November Planning Commission meeting and requested to review the draft minutes in order to better understand what occurred. He asked when the draft minutes would be available and requested that they be provided as soon as possible. Hailey Russell stated that she would provide the draft Planning Commission minutes once completed. She noted that she has been managing several other tasks but anticipates that the draft minutes will be ready by Friday at 1:00 p.m. and stated she would be willing to provide the draft to Vice Mayor Franklin at that time.

Vice Mayor Franklin stated that he had been asked by another Alderman whether he had received an email requesting emails and other information from a law firm. He expressed concern that he had not received any such correspondence and questioned whether there had been an issue with the Town's email system. Hailey Russell clarified that the request was directed only to members of the Planning Commission and did not include the Board of Aldermen.

Public Input Not on Agenda Items (5 Minute Limit)

Libby Young stated that she has previously raised concerns at a Recreation Advisory Board meeting regarding the bridge crossing George's Creek leading to the dog park. She reported that the bridge surface is extremely slick and that she has slipped on it multiple times. Ms. Young expressed concern about the potential for injury and urged the Town to address the issue, noting that previous treatments had not been effective or long-lasting.

Anna Gibson stated that she believed listening to the full recording of the November Planning Commission meeting was necessary to fully understand what occurred, as she felt a written summary would not adequately reflect the tone and conduct of the meeting. She expressed concern regarding what she described as personal attacks directed toward individuals during that meeting. Ms. Gibson also addressed the recent Building Official job posting, stating that while she was not questioning the applicant's qualifications, she raised concerns about potential favoritism or nepotism. She stated that the position had historically been salaried and expressed the opinion that the posted hourly pay range was too low to attract a broader pool of applicants. She further suggested that the position could have been advertised more widely beyond the Town's website. Ms. Gibson stated that she believed a legal matter related to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) could result in litigation and urged the Town to respond to correspondence received from a law firm. Ms. Gibson then raised ethical concerns, alleging that Hailey Russell and Emma Stinnett were using the Town's website and social media platforms to promote a private business, Louisville Nutrition, and stated that such use would be inappropriate under the Town's ethics policy. She also questioned the selection of Pugh Company, CPA, as the Town's auditing firm and stated that she could not find meeting minutes reflecting Board approval of that contract. Ms. Gibson requested documentation related to these matters. Mayor Pugh responded that she is not related to the individuals referenced and stated that she has no personal or financial ties to them. Vice Mayor Franklin stated that he could confirm that Pugh Company, CPA, had been approved by the Board through a multi-year contract during a public meeting. Ms. Gibson requested to review the meeting minutes reflecting that approval. Vice Mayor Franklin stated that the Town would locate the relevant minutes and provide them.

Before the meeting concluded, Hailey Russell advised the Board that Pugh Company, CPA, was approved to perform audit services for the Town at the September 13, 2023, Board meeting.

Diane Morgan stated that she has lived in the Town under several mayors and has attended numerous Board of Mayor and Aldermen and Planning Commission meetings over many years. She recalled periods in the Town's past when meetings were highly contentious and stated that, by comparison, she has not observed similar behavior in recent meetings. Ms. Morgan emphasized that the Town continues to mature as an organization and that there is an ongoing learning process for elected and appointed officials. Ms. Morgan stated that, based on her long-term involvement and attendance at meetings, she has not observed Town officials acting for personal gain. She noted that many individuals serving on boards and commissions are volunteers who give their time to represent the community and make decisions in good faith, acknowledging that while they are not perfect, their service should be recognized. She concluded by thanking Town officials for their time and service.

Adjournment

MOTION by Alderman Kelley to adjourn the meeting. Second by Alderman Vaught. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. **MOTION PASSES.** The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Jill Pugh

Jill Pugh, Mayor

Caleb K. Wheeler

Caleb Wheeler, Recorder