



TOWN OF ASHLAND CITY
Special Called Budget Workshop Meeting
June 10, 2025, IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING THE REGULAR WORKSHOP
MEETING
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Greer called the meeting to order at 6:27 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Greer
Councilman Tim Adkins
Councilwoman Binkley
Vice Mayor Chris Kerrigan
Councilman Michael Smith
Councilman Kevin Thompson
Councilman Tony Young

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilman Thompson, Seconded by Vice Mayor Kerrigan, to approve the agenda. All approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve June 3, 2025, Special called Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Councilman Thompson, Seconded by Vice Mayor Kerrigan, to approve the June 3, 2025, Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes. All approved by voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM

NONE

MAYOR STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC

Before we start our budget hearing tonight, I want to take just a few minutes to share information with our Ashland City friends, neighbors, and taxpayers that I hope will help them understand the current financial challenges our city is facing. Earlier this year, our city's auditors informed me that we were unable to audit our books due to the condition that they were in. Indeed, we had to hire an auditing firm to examine our financial records and give us an accurate statement of our current financial state and help us plan for our 2025/2026 budgeting. To this day, the CPA firm is continuing to work with us to gain an accurate picture of where we really stand financially. In brief, the prior administration did not budget for the additional debt the Town assumed with the construction of our new fire station number one and our new city hall. There was no budgeting for the monthly mortgages on these properties nor was there any budgeting for maintaining these properties. For Example, electricity, water, insurance, housekeeping and more. Additionally, we discovered the previous administration listed sources of income that simply did not exist. Grants that were never even applied for were listed as sources of income; our sales tax income has come in less than what was anticipated and budgeted for. I, as your Mayor, have spent hours working with our city governments Department Heads, to closely examine every current and proposed expenditure to prevent a budget deficit for this current fiscal year, as well as for the upcoming 2025/2026 fiscal years. I commend my department heads and my Chief of Staff for their hard work. Your city council is aware of the situation we are in and is working with me and our department heads to make the right financial decisions as we move forward. It is my administrations job to fix the problems we were left with. We will find ways to tighten our belt without sacrificing the services our town deserves. We will move

through these unforeseen and difficult times, and we will put our town's government on solid financial ground. Thank you.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Budget Discussion - Jamie Winslett, Kellie Reed, James Bence via zoom

Kellie Reed started with the General Fund because she prefers to wrap up one fund before we move to the next fund. Kellie provided updated documents in the binders. Kellie and Jamie found a few revenues that they needed to add in. Kellie also added in a few new expenditures and things that were discussed at the last workshop. She advised the multi-modal grant was not accurate in last week's meeting. After the changes we are currently at a deficit of \$ 431,849.00. The overall deficit has decreased significantly for the year (\$1,180,718.00). That is with all the capital projects that we are currently proposing and all the revenue.

Question Section is next:

1. **Property Tax was proposed at the same rate as last year. Would the board wish to keep the property tax rate or adjust the property tax rate?**

Councilman Thomson asked: Do you have what our tax rate was in fiscal year 2023 and 2024? He advised that our previous mayor lowered the rate for one year because the county raised the tax rate so high.

Kellie explained how the tax assessor sets the tax rate.

Councilman Adkins suggested looking at cuts before they decided on raises the tax rates.

Vice Mayor Kerrigan suggested looking through our mistakes and not penalizing the taxpayers.

Kellie advised the previous tax rate was .62 cents and the current tax rate is .3648. She will double check the numbers to verify. She verified our Fund Balance is fine now and the comptroller will not penalize the city now but in a couple of years the city continues to use the Fund Balance every year, the town will be put on the radar with the comptroller. They will send notification and want a plan of action moving forward. They will eventually step in and do something because the town is not being physically responsible.

4 council members wanted to wait to make the decision on the tax rate until we go through the rest of the budget.

2. **Donations that were proposed. We need to discuss them and decide which if any of them the board wishes to fund within the budget.**

Currently, none has been added to the budget because of the deficit.

Councilman Adkins advised he would like to include a small amount to the donations but not as much as past donations.

- A. Friends of the Library – No Request sent.
- B. Leadership Cheatham County - \$250.00
- C. CHHGA – \$1500.00
- D. Safe Haven – \$500.00
- E. Mid-Cumberland Meals on Wheels - \$1500.00
- F. Firefighters Fund - \$2500.00

3. **Capital Projects**

- A. Downtown Beautification Project. – Cut into Smaller Phases
- B. Sign on Bonus and Training Salary Reimbursement (police academy) – **Keep**
- C. 3 new police cars and equipment (Police) – **Keep**
- D. New police radios due to dispatch changing the radio system (Police) – **Keep**
- E. Replace Expired Tasers (Police) – **Keep**
- F. THSO Car Seat Grant (Fire) – **Keep**
- G. VFEAT grant for PPE(Fire) – **Keep**
- H. Safer Grant (Fire) – **Keep**
- I. Electrical for Tornado Sirens (Fire) - **Keep**
- J. Ford 550 Pickup Truck Squad 10 – already ordered during this current budget (Fire) – **Keep**
- K. New Radios for Fire Department due to dispatch changing the Radio system (Fire) – **Keep**

- L. AED Replacements (Fire) – **Cut**
- M. Extraction tools for squad 10 Truck (Fire) – **Keep**
- N. Tank for Squad 10 (Fire) – **Keep**
- O. Lettering and wrapping for Squad 10 (Fire) – **Keep**
- P. Multi Modal Grant (streets) – **Keep**
- Q. Bucket Truck (streets) – **Cut** - Billy is getting current truck inspected and getting the figures for a used truck instead of new. Possibly change to keep.
- R. Complete remodel Center Grant (Thrive 55) – **Keep**
- S. Drainage/Water run off building repair 9(Thrive 55) – **Keep**
- T. Trail Bridge Engineering (Parks) – **Keep**
- U. Cumberland River and Bicentennial Trail Project (Parks) – **Keep**
- V. Ball Park Remodel (Parks) – **Keep**
- W. Lawn Mower (Parks) – **Cut**
- X. Christmas Lights for Riverbluff Park (Parks) – **Cut**
- Y. Dog Park Equipment and concrete pads (Parks) – **Cut**
- Z. AED machines for the parks (Parks) – **Keep**
- AA.LED sign for Riverbluff Park - **Cut**
- BB.Concrete for the Fire Hall playground (Parks) – **Cut**
- CC. Concrete in front of the stage at Riverbluff Park (Parks) - **Cut**
- DD. Big Metal Letter for Riverbluff Stage area (Parks) – **Cut**
- EE. Lights and Fans at Riverbluff Park Stage (Parks) – **Keep**

Some of the items for Parks could change if we are able to use the Hotel/Motel Tax money and AC gets more accurate figures to use the money wisely for these projects.

The council members voted to give a COLA Raise but still need numbers from Kelly on the percentage they would like to offer to employees. No merit rises this year.

A. Revamped Positions

- B. Administrative Assistant of IT/Codes – Salary paid from = 25% (IT) and 75% (Codes) Proposed (**Approved**)
- C. Public Works Supervisor/Utility Supervisor – Salary Paid from = 1/3 (water) 1/3 (sewer) 1/3 (streets) (**Approved**)
- D. Codes Director/Chief of Staff – Salary paid from = 40% (Finance) and 40% (Codes) and 10% (water) and 10% (Sewer) – (**Approved**)

Street Aid – Straight forward - They proposed \$ 200,000.00 for paving and that is all – (**Approved**)

Drug Fund – Chief Ray has not proposed any monies for the Drug Fund for this budget.

Water/Sewer – James Bence took over – No raise in Water and Sewer rates. They are doing a utility rate study and that counts for everything in the current budget and for the next 5 years. Water and sewer are in the black and doing fine for this budget.

The mayor advised of a resolution to the Hickory Hills sewer issue. They are suggesting removing the \$9.50 fee off their billing so they can pay for the tanks to be pumped. Billy will work on getting Kellie the exact number of homes that would be affected to get the correct amount the city would be decreasing for the residents involved. We will cover more of this in the next budget meeting when returning from recess on June 17, 2025.

3. Chief of Staff - Job Description – Vice Mayor Kerrigan said nothing against Allen, but he is being pulled between 2 jobs. We have added a lot of responsibility to the Director of Codes. He has done a great job as Chief of Staff but with the completion of the New City Hall some of those responsibilities should be taken off because he is not having to attend those meetings and getting the budget in order. This job was created by the mayor instead of hiring a City Administrator. Vice Mayor Kerrigan suggested reducing the responsibilities of the Chief of Staff and splitting the duties 60% Codes and 40% to Chief of Staff. The mayor suggested 40% Codes and 60% Chief of Staff position. The department's codes must be taken care of first and then the administrative duties second.
4. Property Maintenance/Building Inspector Position – Adding the new Position (**Approved**)

5. Pay Table - Was presented to the council members to review with the changes and additional job added. The Finance Director position includes an increase in the pay table to get a qualified candidate. **(Approved)**

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Thompson, Seconded by Councilman Smith, to recess the meeting until June 17, 2025, at 6PM. All approved by voice vote and the meeting recessed at 9:38 p.m.

MAYOR GERALD GREER

CITY RECORDER MARY MOLEPSKE