

Mayor – Angela Russell
Recorder – Rhonda Ardemagni
City Attorney – Tyler R Farrar
Law Firm— Tyler R Farrar Law
City Engineer—CK Civil
Engineering



Ward 1 Position 1 – Misty Piazza
Ward 1 Position 2– Amber Ibarra
Ward 2 Position 1—Daniel Montez
Ward 2 Position 2—Larry Ardemagni
Ward 3 Position 1- Mike Washkowiak
Ward 3 Position 2— Tim Burress

City Council
March 17th, 2026
Minutes

The Tontitown City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Tontitown City Hall.

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 220 667 057 989 Passcode: Aepw56

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City Council

- 1) **Prayer-** Pastor Schmidt from the Heartland Church
- 2) **Meeting Call to Order**
- 3) **Roll Call**
All in attendance
- 4) **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 5) **Approval of Agenda**

Items from March 5, 2026, Special Meeting, Did Not Pass—Re-Vote Required

A city council of six members must have at least four present to conduct business. However, Arkansas Code §14-55-203 states that to pass any law, ordinance, resolution, or order, a concurrence of a majority of the whole number of members elected to the council is required. Because the council has six elected members, passage of any such item requires four affirmative votes, regardless of how many members are present.

At the March 5, 2026, Special Meeting, both items received votes of 3–2. Because neither item received the required four affirmative votes, neither item passed. These matters will need to be placed on a future agenda and voted on again.

Mayor Russell requested to add under New Business Item M- An approval of accepting the low bid for roofing 13 city buildings.

Add to the next Committee of the Whole Meeting-

An approval of an ordinance to expand the Tontitown Planning Commission to 7 members.
Supported by: Mike Washkowiak

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve the agenda with changes.
Second by Amber Ibarra

Motion Passes Unanimously

6) Approval of February 17th, 2026, City Council Minutes and March 5th, 2026, Special City Council Minutes

Tim Burress motioned to approve the February 17th, 2026, City Council Minutes and March 5th, 2026, Special City Council Minutes.

Second by Daniel Montez

Tim Burress Voted- YES

Amber Ibarra Voted- ABSTAIN

Mike Washkowiak Voted- YES

Misty Piazza Voted- YES

Daniel Montez Voted- YES

Larry Ardemagni Voted- YES

5 Votes- YES to 1 Vote- ABSTAIN

Motion Passes

7) Financial Report

Reference the city website for detailed report.

8) Department Reports

A. Museum

Tontitown Historical Museum (THM) Report for the COW Meeting Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

The THM Board of Directors met March 2, 2026, at City Hall at 6p.m.

1. Summer Camp: We are happy to announce we will be hosting a 3-day summer camp this June, from the 8th-10th. Students will get a chance to learn about Tontitown history through crafts, games, food and get a chance to explore their own history through a guided ancestry activity. Please see our social media or email museum@tontitownar.gov for more details.

2. Digitization Project: Staff are working on textile photographing, this includes wedding dresses, Queen Concordia dresses, vestments, early settler clothing, blankets, flags and banners.

3. Visitors: 131 (including 97 from the Rollins 3rd Grade field trip), 2025: 18

4. New Exhibits 2026: The America250 display is open, this display covers the early years of Tontitown history to Incorporation and our first election in 1910. There are highlights on our first business, the families that were not Italian that settled here in

those early years like the Bash, Haney and Strabbala families; and some reproductions that guests can handle.

5. Translations: Staff are working on translating an Italian cookbook that was written by Rosa Martinelli Bersi, this will be a long project as we decipher the writing and the language, we will be working with AI and the an Italian language expert to show students how translating works from AI, using online translators, and then with a native speaker/reader.

6. Heritage Day: Save the date for Tontitown Heritage Day, May 31st. This will be a great opportunity to enjoy an afternoon in the park and explore the museum and all the new exhibits. More details to come next month on food and activities!

THM Board will meet on April 6th, Chambers at City Hall at 6p.m.

B. Police

Tontitown Police Monthly Report Month: February 2026

Calls for Service – 1006

Accident Reports – 19

Warrants Served – 96

Warrants Outstanding - 1394

Warrants Amount - \$ 1,726,534.91

Training Hours (YTD) – 738

Citation Total - 185

Speeding Citations -16

(Other) Traffic Citations - 133

Criminal Citations – 18

Improper Driving (City Ordinance) - 18

Warning Total – 621

Speeding Warnings – 162

(Other) Traffic Warnings – 459

C. Fire

Fire Department Report FEBRUARY 2026

Total Calls: 39

EMS 15

FIRE 8

MVA 9

FIRE ALARM 4

SERVICE CALL 3

CANCELED IN ROUTE 0

Calls within city limits of Tontitown

February 2026: 93 calls for service

February 2025: 98 calls for service

Decrease of 5 calls to date over 2025

Average response time (Alarm to en route) listed at: 1 minute 10 seconds.

Average on scene/arrival time (Alarm to on scene): 4 minutes 08 seconds.

D. **Public Works/Engineering-** Reference the city website for detailed report.

E. **Building Report-** Reference the city website for detailed report.

F. **Community Development**

March Report:
Building Report

Community Development Department

- Planning 1. Variance Request – Applicant is requesting a variance on fence requirements for the front yard. Property is located at 319 & 351 W Baker Ave. Parcel #: 830-38063-000 & 38062-000.

- 2. Review Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU's) code changes to adopt per state enacted law.

- 3. Discussion on Community Building Façade Material

- Street and Stormwater

412/Barrington

2nd phase of Fletcher

Mantegani

South Pinalto Drainage

2025 Street Improvements

412 Limited Access Study

- Grants

Corridor Study

- Other Projects

CPA

HR Consultants

Park Event and Recreation Coordinator position

Employee Handbook Update

412 Limited Access Study

Community Building

Park Board

9) **Approval by City Council Members to Waive the 3 Reading Rule for All Ordinances on Agenda**

Mike Waskowiak motioned to Waive the 3 Reading Rule for All Ordinances on Agenda.

Second by Misty Piazza

Motion Passes Unanimously

10) Old Business:

11) New Business:

A. A discussion on a report from Evey Weisblat. Presented by: Mayor

Evey Weisblat, a freelance reporter who has conducted investigations into public health concerns related to Waste Management, attended the meeting and presented her findings to the council. Her report was extensive; a full recording is available on YouTube for those who wish to review the details. In addition, her complete written report is included in these minutes.

B. An approval of an ordinance to rezone 2.89 acres from A (Agriculture) to R-1 (Single Family Residential) located at 2150 S Barrington Rd. Parcel #: 830-39924-000 Sponsored by: Misty/Brad

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve the ordinance to rezone 2.89 acres from A (Agriculture) to R-1 (Single Family Residential) located at 2150 S Barrington Rd.
Second by Larry Ardemagni

Motion Passes Unanimously

C. An approval of a resolution for STP funding. Presented by: Mayor/Mark

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve the resolution for STP funding.
Second by Amber Ibarra

Motion Passes Unanimously

D. An approval of a resolution authorizing the City to enter with Schulte Supply for Cellular Meter Equipment. Presented by: Mayor/Mark

This is to lock in the price and for Option B.

Misty Piazza motioned to approve the resolution authorizing the city to enter with Schulte Supply for Cellular Meter Equipment.
Second by Larry Ardemagni

Motion Passes Unanimously

**E. An approval of a resolution for the Water Department to purchase a truck.
Mayor/James**

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve the resolution for the Water Department to purchase a truck.

Second by Misty Piazza

Motion Passes Unanimously

F. An approval of a resolution authorizing the solicitation of statements of qualifications for professional engineering services. Presented by: Mayor/James

The RFQ bid date has been changed to April 30, 2026.

Misty Piazza motion to approve the resolution authorizing the solicitation of statements of qualifications for professional engineering services with changes.

Second by Mike Washkowiak

Motion Passes Unanimously

G. Approval of a resolution authorizing the use of Water/Sewer Department Reserve Funds for completion of the water tank project. Presented by: Mayor/James

Tim Buresse motioned to approve the resolution authorizing the use of Water/Sewer Department Reserve Funds for completion of the water tank project and to not exceed \$850,000.00.

Second by Misty Piazza

Motion Passes Unanimously

H. An approval of a resolution for a change order for Mantegani Road. Present by: Mayor/Mark

Tim Buresse motioned to approve the resolution for a change order for Mantegani Road.

Second by Larry Ardemagni

Motion Passes Unanimously

I. An approval of an ordinance to update and amend Ordinance 2017-05-633 regarding Ordinance and Resolution Books. Sponsored by: Danny

Tim Buresse motioned to approve the ordinance to update and amend Ordinance 2017-05-633 regarding Ordinance and Resolution Books.

Second by Misty Piazza

Motion Passes Unanimously

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve the Emergency Clause.
Second by Mike Washkowiak

Motion Passes Unanimously

- J. An approval of a resolution to amend the budget regarding fire radios purchased in 2025. Presented by: Mayor/Ryan**

Mike Wahkowiak motioned to approve the resolution to amend the budget regarding fire radios purchased in 2025.
Second by Tim Burress

Motion Passes Unanimously

- K. An approval of a resolution for the tuition to send five (5) individuals to Paramedic School. Presented by: Mayor/Ryan**

Tim Burress motioned to approve the resolution for the tuition to send five (5) individuals to Paramedic School.
Second by Amber Ibarra

Motion Passes Unanimously

- L. An approval of a resolution allowing the Fire Department to hire an EMS Captain. Presented by: Mayor/Ryan**

Tim Burress motioned to approve the resolution allowing the Fire Department to hire an EMS Captain.
Second by Mike Washkowiak

Motion Passes Unanimously

- M. An approval of accepting the low bid for roofing 13 city buildings.**

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve accepting the low bid for roofing 13 city buildings.
Second by Daniel Montez

Motion Passes Unanimously

12) Public Comments

Kenneth Lovett- Fayetteville

- There is a class action lawsuit against Eco Vista and it's open to anyone within three miles of the working face. If you want to be part of this case, please reach out to the lawyers. Information is posted online by City of Tontitown and the Community of Tontitown and me and Facebook pages and several news sites.
- In my opinion, with the good old boy club bulling their way into city business in the cow, two aldermen worked together to attempt to control specific vehicle purchase for the Water Department. In the end, I believe Danny was approved to be consulted before the purchase of the truck, Tontitown pays James Clark to lead the department. If you do not trust him to do his job, you need to replace him.
- I don't understand the process of trying to pick people to do somebody else's job. The City Council approved responsibilities to two employees to assist the Treasurer/City Clerk in her responsibilities. Today, I sent a FOIA concerning the ISO rating of the Tontitown City Fire Department. No one responded until 3 p.m. And then the employee that was responding was not at work and responded on her day off. The help was created to assist Rhonda's to do her job, not be assigned to do her job, even on her days off. The ISO rating of the Fire Department cost citizens more for their homeowner's insurance. Tontitown had a better rating when Mark Ramsay was chief and in the metal shed over here. Now we got a state-of-the-art firehouse and the chief either cannot or will not get it inspected for a better ISO class for the department. I don't understand why these people can't do their job properly and why somebody don't push them to do their job properly. They are public servants and I expect them to do the public service. Thank you.

Tim Schmidt 873 Javello Rd., Tontitown, Ar

- I'm originally from the St. Louis area. So, the Bridgton dump that she is talking about, I'm very familiar with that. There's actually an underground fire currently and their problem is they have radioactive material other part of their waste. So, if that fire reaches the radioactive area, it could make part of St. Louis uninhabitable. I don't think we have radioactive material here. So that's good. But there's an actually a documentary about that situation called Atomic Homefront. The people there in Bridgton have fought all the way up to the federal level. I mean it's been going on for years. So, I don't know the woman that's kind of spearheaded that, but someone asked about what are our next steps. It might be something worth checking into that and seeing who those people are and what they've gone through and what they've done. But there's all sorts of very strange cancers all around this landfill and all the neighborhoods and everything around there. So, I mean, very strange cancers that just don't really occur and then finally, I'm not saying this is attributed to that. We moved here 12 years ago, my mother-in-law is currently dying stage four cancer It's all through her body, she's in hospice right now in our home. And my daughter, who is 19, has had chronic health issues that developed about six or seven years ago. Again, I'm not saying, I can't prove this is the landfill. But I would just encourage all of you as our councilman, mayor, whatever we can do, keep fighting this because if

10 years down the road we have all these strange cancers in Tontitown, you'll be able to say we did everything we could do to fight this. We may not be able to stop them, but we can say we fought it all the way through versus doing nothing and 10 years down the road, God forbid there's all kinds of strange cancers in our area, we sat on our hands. So, thank you very much. Appreciate all that you guys do.

13) Comments from Alderman

Tim Burress

- I want to especially thank Evey for speaking this evening and one of my children had the opportunity to go to the governor's mansion last week and he directly asked the governor for help. So, I know that the governor is aware of what's happening here. It's clear based on the brief conversation they had. We had State Representatives here tonight; Mr. Unger and Mrs. Lundstrum were both here. Thankful they were here and I know that they're doing the best that they can to try to get the word to the governor. But I want to appeal, I know she's probably not watching, but if anybody out there knows the governor or has the governor's ear, this is really serious and she may not think that it is and she may believe ADEQ at this particular point in time, but this is something that is harming people and is very likely to hurt the state on a wider level. So please take this very seriously. Thank you.

Larry Ardemagni

- I would reiterate that I appreciate her doing that study and presenting it to us and again, as in every meeting, I just want to express the fact that I appreciate our staff citywide do an excellent job. Appreciate you guys and girls, women, whatever the case may be, ladies. Thank you

Amber Ibarra

- Just want to thank everyone for coming out for Evey, Mr. Lovett, Pastor Smith. just for your comments.

Misty Piazza

- Thank you everyone for coming out. Please save the date for May 31st for the Heritage Days. It's always a great time and it's a great way to learn about your heritage. The new exhibits in the museum are really outstanding if you have a veteran in your family. The ladies just do a fabulous job of bringing history well as if you notice we got our new sign and thank you to all of our donors that have made the sign happen and our roof and new sighting and it just looks really nice. So excited to see all of that. Thank you again for everyone coming out.

Daniel Montez

- I want to thank everybody for coming out tonight and speaking. Sorry about the microphone issue hopefully we get that resolved so that I don't have to just stare right here into my monitor and talk into the microphone. I want to thank Mr. Latham for the Parks Board. I went to that meeting last Friday and kind of observed you know what goes on in that meeting and who's all a part of it and what makes that board up because I was unaware of what all goes in there. So, it was great to be there and observe that that board in action so thank you for heading that. I'm really excited about the community building that we're going to be transforming the old fire station into and what that's going to look like. So, if you get a chance to talk to Mark or Zac, they'll enlighten you of what's coming and how that's coming forward and the great success that we're having with that progress. Also, you know, we had a comment tonight about our Public Works Director and I don't think if you watched that meeting, I had any lack of faith in his judgment of picking out a pickup truck. But it was brought up that I have a vast knowledge in purchasing pickup trucks and stuff. I have no question in my mind that Mr. Clark knows what he's doing. I have full confidence in what he does, but I am here to assist the city and any duties that they have, if any citizen has any problems or concerns with how I conduct business, I welcome them to speak to me directly and see if we can't come to an agreement on procedure. Everybody have a good night.

14) Comments from Mayor

I think everything that Evey talked about tonight really hits home with some of us, I appreciate all the work that she's done and I know that she has gotten a lot of her information from court cases and she's also contacted different scientists and gotten more knowledge to make sure that everything that she has said is correct. I appreciate her for driving as long as she had to get here tonight. So, we all have homework. I would suggest that everybody goes home and watch the movie Dark Waters, Atomic Homefront, and Aaron Brochovich, which I watched last night. So, I appreciate you all. I really want what is best for the city of Tontitown, and I do hope that we can get something about this because it is affecting our city, it's affecting our citizens and we really need help from the state.

15) Comments from City Attorney

- I just appreciate the hard work of everybody up here and the hard work of all the staff of the city and everybody have a good night. Thank you.

16) Adjournment- All in Favor

PASSED AND APPROVED this 21 day of April 2026.

APPROVED: Angela Russell
Angela Russell, Mayor

ATTEST: Rhonda Ardemagni
Rhonda Ardemagni, City Clerk-Treasurer
(SEAL)

Sponsor (Initiated By): N/A City Clerk

Motion to Introduce Made By: Tim Burr~~ESS~~

Seconded By: Mike WashKowiak

Adopted / Passed: PASSED

Vote: Ayes 2 Nays _____ Abstain _____ Absent _____

Thank you, Mayor Russell, for giving me the opportunity to speak tonight. Thank you to all who have supported my work, and to all who came out to listen to me speak.

My name is Evey Weisblat, and I'm a freelance investigative reporter based in Benton County. I have been doing environmental journalism for the last five years, during which time I've reported on air pollution and water pollution from various industrial sites and the impacts it has had on fence-line communities like Tontitown. I moved here last year from North Carolina, where I reported on water contamination from Chemours, the spin-off company of DuPont, which you might be familiar with from the film *Dark Waters*.

I saw a Facebook post back in September about the Eco-Vista Landfill, and it immediately caught my attention. Perhaps to the dismay of my husband and my bank account, I have been singularly focused on following that lead. I have spent the last six months investigating the Eco-Vista Landfill, and the impacts it has had on this community. Tonight, I want to share with you my findings, which will be published in *The Arkansas Times*, a statewide news outlet, on April 1. The story should be available in print and online, and I hope you will take the opportunity to read it.

As with any medium, there are certain limitations to journalism, so not all of what I will share with you tonight will be included in the article, which is why I am extra grateful to the Tontitown city council for giving me the opportunity to share with y'all the unabridged findings.

My investigation into the Eco-Vista Landfill has revealed an urgent threat to public health and safety that has been ignored, and in some cases exacerbated by the inaction of Arkansas state regulators, particularly the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality - ADEQ. The crisis is three-pronged: air pollution, water contamination, and land instability. I'll briefly touch on each of these aspects.

Air pollution

First, is the obvious, air pollution. Because you are all familiar with the impacts the landfill has had on air quality — you know better than anyone what it smells like, the impacts those odors, the health effects of the vapors — I will not go into the weeds on that aspect, other than to say, based on my significant research, your concerns are valid. The chemicals detected in previous air sampling are consistent with the health symptoms you are experiencing, according to Dr. Philip Landrigan, a nationally recognized public health expert who was consulted for this report. Moreover, my data analysis of 726 complaints in the ADEQ's database shows that one in three complaints about Eco-Vista reports a health symptom. And 99% of complaints that mention a health symptom also mention an odor. It's an incredibly tight correlation.

But let me address the elephant in the room. Many of you were frustrated, understandably so, to learn that, in the latest round of testing last May, ADEQ essentially absolved Eco-Vista of responsibility for the pollution. You were also frustrated no doubt to hear that the pollution

detected was largely consistent with normal air quality in the United States. Let me assuage your concerns: this is misleading.

There are a few glaring issues with that test which I have uncovered. First, the 2025 test claimed the pollutants detected were largely consistent with background levels in the U.S., but that is a misleading statement. Some compounds detected were significantly higher than EPA screening levels used to determine whether further investigation of air pollution is warranted. The concerns about acrolein and benzene in previous tests were not disproved by this test. In fact, Benzene levels were actually higher in the 2025 test than in the April 2024, rising to 0.77 parts per billion, which is twice as high as what was documented in the April test. The 2025 test also found the same amount of acrolein - at 0.45 parts per billion. It detected 36 of the 50 compounds tested for; the vast majority of compounds detected in the 2025 test, Eco-Vista emits.

The Arkansas Department of Health released a health assessment of CTEH's study in January of this year. The findings were alarming. The assessment acknowledged that the levels of one toxic chemical, acrylonitrile, represent a health risk of 1 in 10,000 additional cancer cases, the highest public health risk level. The health report also confirmed acrylonitrile exposure includes symptoms commonly documented by residents, including "nose and throat irritation, difficulty breathing, nausea, dizziness, weakness, headache, impaired judgment, and convulsions." Although DEQ acknowledged that Eco-Vista is the only facility in Washington County that has reported emitting acrylonitrile, the agency again pointed to other sources, and said it has enlisted the EPA to further investigate.

Second, the testing claimed hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide were not detected, but it used equipment that was insensitive and notoriously finicky to look for these highly toxic compounds. Hydrogen sulfide is synonymous with the rotten egg odor so many of you have reported smelling. But CTEH used real-time air monitors with a detection threshold of 0.1 parts per million to look for hydrogen sulfide. That is about 200 times higher than what the human nose can detect. When Tontitown commissioned basic air sampling on the lift station using more appropriate equipment, hydrogen sulfide was detected as high as 0.26 parts per million – which is enough to cause health symptoms, and is about 2,000 times higher than background levels.

Third, for lack of a better term, the test was rigged. Public records obtained confirmed that testing had been done in a way that diminished the pollutants detected. ADEQ ordered Waste Management to provide proof it was performing daily cover only during the study period; WM was instructed to photograph covered working faces on May 2 – an order that the agency rescinded on May 20, shortly after the study concluded. Studies show uncovered working faces account for 79% of landfill air emissions. Moreover, CTEH used the fact that the landfill was covered on the weekends to determine the source of the air pollution and orders. But since the landfill was covered the entire time of air sampling, CTEH's methodology is completely redundant.

Water contamination

OK, let's move onto water pollution. As many of you know, we are on Karst topography. Water here does not stay put. It can travel miles in a matter of days, and unlike other topographies, water pollutants do not get filtered or diluted when they enter the water table – they seep through the porous limestone. The Karst bedrock that makes this region so special — that gives us beautiful caves, picturesque bluffs, natural springs, and scenic waterways with clear blue water — is also what makes this area uniquely vulnerable to water pollution. In addition to travelling quickly in unpredictable directions, groundwater also does not stay below ground in a Karst – springs shoot it back up to the surface, where it can mingle with surface water used by our public water systems. The reverse is true, with sinking streams that flow directly into the water table.

In a perfect system, a landfill is a closed loop. Liners hold back leachate, and the water table never comes into contact with the highly toxic landfill liquid. But even in the most well-maintained landfills, it's almost impossible to prevent leachate leaks.

There is no question in my mind that leachate from Eco-Vista has already seeped into the groundwater here. State inspectors documented multiple leachate leaks in March of 2023, during an unusual period of increased inspections. Inspections got less thorough, and less frequent, after that, but the fact remains – if that much leachate was leaking in just a three-week period, when the cameras were on, how much has escaped when no one is looking? This is especially concerning because we know that Eco-Vista's waste cells have a direct flow path off-site to Wildcat Creek and several local springs, from the dye test that was done here a few years ago. Other dye tests in earlier years have shown similar, fast-moving connections.

You can imagine a landfill liner as two cups. The primary liner is the top cup, and the secondary liner is the bottom cup. Inside the bottom cup, there is a collection sump that detects leaks, known as the leak detection system (LDS). Eco-Vista's LDS is frequently saturated with leachate. In its December 2025 water monitoring report, the leak detection system showed liquid with ammonia and chloride concentrations nearly identical to those found in the leachate (the first cup). While ADEQ has tried to downplay these detections, there is no getting around the facts: If water matching the chemical composition of leachate is frequently found in the leak detection system, the primary liner has already breached.

Still, the state maintains the local groundwater is not contaminated with toxic chemicals from leachate. To test the state's claims, myself and two residents tested a private well located a few hundred feet from the fence line for PFAS – commonly referred to as “forever chemicals.” PFAS are a group of highly toxic and pervasive chemicals that do not break down naturally in the environment or the human body. They are linked to a plethora of health effects, including various cancers, increased cholesterol, reproductive issues, liver damage, kidney damage, thyroid disease and more. Unlike other contaminants that, although harmful, may be from natural processes, PFAS are entirely man-made; they get into local water supplies through industrial manufacturing discharges, firefighting foam runoff at military or airports, landfill leachate leaks, and the application of contaminated biosolids. In fact, a 2021 EPA study found

PFAS in the leachate of 95% of landfills sampled, confirming them as a major source of environmental contamination.

When we tested the local well for “forever chemicals,” not only did we find dangerously high concentrations of these toxic chemicals, but we found PFAS that matched the specific chemical fingerprint for landfills. This includes legacy chemicals that have been phased out of use for years, but specifically show up in landfill leachate because of the presence of old consumer waste.

In response to this test, ADEQ specifically said it does not regulate PFAS. Let me say this again: The Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality, charged with protecting this state’s waterways, explicitly told me it does not regulate this group of highly toxic and pervasive chemicals. This effectively means any industrial polluter has free reign to discharge “forever chemicals” into the natural state. That affects not only the people in this room, but every citizen of every person in Northwest Arkansas and Northeast Oklahoma that relies on the Illinois River Watershed to survive. It affects every citizen of Arkansas who gets their water from a well.

Elevated Temperature Landfill

Unfortunately, air pollution and water contamination are not Eco-Vista's only problems. A report from Carbon Chicken, the independent engineering firm the city contracted with to test an air filter on the S Pianalto Road lift station a few months ago, concluded via basic air testing that Eco-Vista was showing symptoms of an Elevated Temperature Landfill (ETL)—a subterranean, hot chemical reaction similar to an underground fire, where the trash literally cooks beneath the surface, instead of decomposing normally. The report compared Eco-Vista directly to the Chiquita Canyon Landfill environmental disaster in California, an ETL that has caused widespread toxic air pollution, hazardous leachate spills, and significant health concerns for the surrounding community. The Carbon Chicken report concluded Eco-Vista was experiencing an “unstable biological process that requires immediate diagnostic monitoring.”

This is not the only warning sign that Eco-Vista has entered ETL territory. My investigation has uncovered several more alarming signs that landfill's decomposition process has been disrupted, and dangerous heat-generating reactions are taking place below the surface. One such finding is carbon monoxide data. Eco-Vista's air permit reports show Eco-Vista released about 80 tons of carbon monoxide in the last year. Carbon monoxide is a sign of incomplete combustion. In a landfill, it is a strong sign of an ETL, because it is a byproduct of abnormal, heat-generating chemical reactions occurring within the waste mass.

Another symptom of an ETL is widespread, noxious odors reported in the surrounding area of a landfill, and failures of a landfill's gas containment system. Eco-Vista has experienced both of these. The landfill's gas containment systems – the underground gas wells that extract methane and turn it into marketable natural gas — are struggling. According to federally mandated air permit reports obtained via a public records request, in nearly every report filed over the last five years, the facility has documented a persistent inability to maintain negative pressure at its gas extraction wells. Instead of sucking methane and other landfill gases safely into the collection

system, highly pressurized methane is overwhelming the infrastructure and migrating outward. As this uncontrolled methane travels through the landfill and mixes with underground pockets of oxygen, it creates a massive explosion hazard. At that point, all it takes is a single spark - a bulldozer blade striking a rock, a discarded battery, or the smoldering subsurface reaction beneath the landfill (ETL) - to trigger a catastrophic detonation.

In a landfill like Eco-Vista, which has seen consistent failures to cover waste piles regularly, the risk of oxygen intrusion is amplified. So, too, is the case in a Karst system, where the porous limestone creates open pathways for air to circulate, and to mix with migrating explosive gas from Eco-Vista.

Another symptom of an ETL is subsurface fires. Fires in general are a well-documented issue at Eco-Vista. State and city fire records show Eco-Vista has experienced at least 17 fires in the last 10 years, including three in 2025 alone. During Eco-Vista's permit expansion hearings in 2024, landfill fire expert Todd Thalhamer explicitly warned ADEQ that the facility's lack of planning and flammable cover materials would inevitably cause an uncontrolled fire there that could release toxic gas plumes into the community. He said the landfill's operators "need to plan for a catastrophic event," and specifically warned about subsurface fires at Eco-Vista. Tontitown fire department reports show such a fire occurred exactly as the expert predicted, in November of last year, with a fire that started at the bottom of the waste pit and "rekindled" two days later.

The impacts of an uncontrolled ETL are dire. If nothing is done, not only is there the risk of a life-threatening explosion or uncontrolled fire, there is also the possibility of sinkholes opening up at Eco-Vista, and the leachate leaking into the groundwater supply, where it will cause catastrophic water pollution that would be difficult to fully remediate. And, even without a sinkhole, the liners and gas containment infrastructure can melt under extreme heat, causing more water pollution and toxic gas releases.

To confirm beyond the shadow of a doubt that an ETL is occurring at Eco-Vista, we need to know the temperature of the landfill gas below the surface. But Eco-Vista stopped reporting gas temperatures or oxygen concentrations in its gas wells in 2022. New reporting mechanisms only require pressure to be reported, and rely on the trustworthiness of landfill operators to self-report oxygen or temperature exceedances. In other words, those records are locked behind closed doors at Eco-Vista.

ADEQ refuses to address this issue either. They have taken Eco-Vista's word for it, but have not inspected the applicable records. When I asked ADEQ about the possibility of an ETL developing at Eco-Vista, the agency said it "does not have (an) indication that Eco-Vista Class 1 landfill is experiencing elevated landfill temperature." What about the Class 4?

Conclusion

I do not say all this to scare you. It is entirely possible that Eco-Vista will avoid such a catastrophe. But it is better to be safe than sorry. The repercussions of ignoring the water

pollution and an ETL at Eco-Vista are too grave to accept. Pollution does not respect property boundaries, and it doesn't care about state lines. It doesn't care about class, race, or politics.

To the residents of Tontitown, I have a message for you: You are not crazy. You are not imagining the odors, and you're not making up the symptoms. I've smelled the odors myself, and felt the pollution in my lungs. At the same time, I have verified all this through the data. I have seen behind the curtain, so to speak, and the science confirms what lived-experience has already demonstrated: Eco-Vista's pollution is unchecked, dangerous, and only going to get worse if nothing is done. The people are in danger, and the land is crying out for help.

I don't have all the answers, and I can't say what comes next. But I am sharing this because I believe Eco-Vista is on the verge of catastrophe, and the powers that be are at best indifferent to the somber reality we know find ourselves in. But it's not too late. I have faith that the people in this room tonight will be able to see a path forward together.

Thank you.