

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



Ward 1 Position 1 – Craig Graves
Ward 1 Position 2– Mick Wagner
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
August 18th, 2026
Minutes

**The Tontitown City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at
Tontitown City Hall.**

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device.

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City Council

- 1) **Call to order**
- 2) **Prayer led by Pastor Jaymi Blakenship**
- 3) **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 4) **Roll Call- All in Attendance**
- 5) **Approval of August 3, 2026, City Council Minutes.**

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve August 3, 2026, City Council Minutes.
Second by Daniel Montez

Motion Passes Unanimously

- 6) **Approval of August 18th, 2026, City Council Agenda and Department reports.**

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve the August 18th, 2026, City Council Agenda.
Second by Mick Wagner

Craig Graves Voted- YES
Mick Wagner Voted- YES
Daniel Montez Voted- ABSTAIN
Larry Ardemagni Voted- YES
Mike Washkowiak Voted- YES
Tim Burress- Voted- YES

5 Votes- YES to 1 Vote- ABSTAIN
Motion Passes

- 7) **Old Business: NONE**
- 8) **Public Comment on agenda items**

Mark Calcagni 12642 Arbor Acres Rd., Tontitown, AR

Mr. Calcagni asked the Tontitown City Council to oppose Waste Management's proposed ADQ air permit and pass a resolution against it before the August 25 public hearing.

His main concerns were:

- Waste Management's Echo Vista facility has reportedly had 10 fires in nine years and numerous citizen complaints about odors and air quality.
- Neighbors have reported headaches, nausea, eye irritation, breathing problems, and hospital visits allegedly linked to hazardous vapors.
- Air testing reportedly found acrolein at 4,900% and benzene at 209% above EPA regional screening levels, both of which are carcinogenic.
- Another air test reportedly detected a highly toxic human carcinogen.
- Mr. Calcagni connected the landfill to nearby cancer cases, though this is an allegation rather than established causation.
- He also cited high COD and BOD levels in 2020 leachate, which he said could harm wastewater treatment and aquatic life.
- He argued that Waste Management has known about these problems for years without adequately correcting them.
- His overall appeal was that public health and safety should be a top priority, and the city should formally oppose the permit.

Tammy Graham 1984 S. Pinalto Rd., Tontitown, AR

Ms. Graham criticized the Tontitown City Council for failing to address ongoing ammonia odors and lift-station problems affecting residents, particularly her neighbor Nina Brown.

- On August 10, 2026, Graham said Nina Brown experienced strong ammonia odors from the pump/lift station, became severely hypertensive, and was advised by firefighters to go to the ER.
- Graham said Brown has reported similar problems for several years, and argued the city has had the legal authority to address the issue since at least 2020.
- She questioned whether city officials were unaware of their authority or knowingly chose not to act.
- Graham referenced a 2022 Waste Management proposal for leachate/effluent pretreatment, asking whether the council knew about it and what action it took.
- She criticized the council for pursuing larger projects and its broader campaign against Waste Management while, in her view, failing to fix the immediate sewer/lift-station problems.
- She argued that a clogged line and needed repairs should be addressed before pursuing broader actions against Waste Management.
- Graham warned that continued inaction could result in serious injury or death and potentially expose the city to responsibility.

- Her central message was: stop focusing on political attention and Waste Management disputes, fix the lift station, and prioritize the residents directly affected.

Nina Brown 1851 S. Pianalto Rd., Tontitown, AR

Ms. Brown, who lives across from the lift station, described years of recurring odors and possible chemical vapors that she believes are coming from the lift station and landfill leachate.

- She said she and other residents have experienced repeated odors and vapors for 4–5 years.
- Because the lift station sits in a valley with constantly changing and swirling winds, she said exposure is unpredictable and difficult to document.
- Ms. Brown said she has experienced several serious episodes and has had to leave her home multiple times, including a recent incident.
- She wants the city to establish a reliable system to detect, monitor, and document potential chemical exposures.
- She said residents don't know exactly what chemicals they are being exposed to because the leachate contains chemicals and its composition may change when exposed to air.
- She requested routine maintenance and better inspection of the lift station, equipment, and sewer lines, along with consistent follow-up.
- Ms. Brown also called for a clear plan involving Tontitown and Waste Management, including Waste Management pre-treating its leachate before it reaches the treatment system.

Bottom line: Ms. Brown's main request was for the city to stop relying on residents to document the problem themselves and establish ongoing monitoring, maintenance, testing, and a concrete plan to prevent potentially hazardous exposures.

Bobby Russell, 1497 Arbor Acres Ave., Tontitown, AR

Requested that a video be played for the council.

Tim Burress motioned to allow the council to watch the video.
Second by Larry Ardemagni

Craig Graves Voted- YES
Mick Wagner Voted- NO
Daniel Montez Voted- YES
Larry Ardemagni Voted- YES
Mike Washkowiak Voted- NO
Tim Burress- Voted- YES

4 Votes- YES to 2 Votes- NO

Motion Passes

KNWA News Report Summary

KNWA reported on a new Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment air-quality study around the Eco Vista landfill.

- Earlier investigations found that state regulators had not initially conducted chemical air testing despite residents' complaints about fumes making them sick.
- After continued complaints and a 2022 investigation, the Arkansas National Guard conducted testing in 2024, followed by state-commissioned testing by an independent company.
- The latest study involved three days of testing at 14 locations around the landfill.
- Researchers detected five potentially toxic chemicals: acrolein, benzene, carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, and another chemical identified in the report.
- Acrolein was measured at up to 4,900% above the EPA's regional screening level, while benzene was also above the screening threshold.
- KNWA reported that all 14 testing locations showed levels above the EPA screening threshold for acrolein and benzene.
- The report emphasized that EPA screening levels are indicators for when risks may warrant further investigation, not proof that someone has been harmed.
- Most importantly, the testing does not prove that the Eco Vista landfill is the source of the chemicals found in the surrounding air.
- However, the findings provide the community with significant new data supporting its longstanding request for official air-quality monitoring and further investigation.

Bottom line: The report says potentially hazardous chemicals were repeatedly detected around the landfill, in some cases substantially above EPA screening levels, but the testing does not establish that the landfill caused those chemicals to be present or caused residents' health problems.

9) New Business:

A. A discussion and approval on a resolution updated the Tontitown Employee Handbook. Sponsored by: Mike

Changes included:

- Vacation accrual: Language was clarified/tightened, with no reduction in vacation benefits.
- Sick leave: The policy was updated.
- Police and Fire employees: Leave accrual will begin after 30 days of employment instead of after one year.

Overall, the changes were described as relatively straightforward and limited, with the biggest substantive change being the earlier start of leave accrual for police and fire personnel.

Tim Burress motioned to approve the resolution updated the Tontitown Employee Handbook.

Second by Larry Ardemagni

Motion Passes Unanimously

B. A discussion and approval of an Ordinance to establish the Director of Human Resources Position. Sponsored by: Danny

The ordinance would formally establish a Director of Human Resources position and department within City Hall.

Responsibilities include:

- Making the HR director a department head who reports directly to the mayor.
- Administering the city's personnel policies and procedures consistently across all departments.
- Coordinating job postings, recruitment, application reviews, interviews, reference checks, and hiring documentation.
- Overseeing employee onboarding and separation procedures.
- Generally centralizing and coordinating the city's human-resources functions.

Bottom line: The ordinance creates a formal HR leadership role at City Hall, with the HR director serving as the city's central personnel administrator and directly accountable to the mayor.

Daniel Montez motioned to approve the Ordinance to establish the Director of Human Resources Position.

Second by Mick Wagner

Motion Passes Unanimously

C. A discussion and approval of a resolution opposing the Waste Management Expansion. Sponsored by: Tim

Councilman Burress spoke in favor of a resolution opposing Waste Management's proposed expansion/air permit for the Eco Vista landfill.

Main points:

- He said complaints about the landfill have been the most consistent citizen complaint during his six years on the council.
- Residents have reported headaches, nausea, breathing difficulties, burning eyes, heart palpitations, and high blood pressure.
- He cited air testing showing acrolein and benzene above EPA regional screening levels, saying acrolein was reportedly 4,900% above and benzene 209% above those levels.
- He mentioned reports of cancer, Parkinson's disease, and other illnesses among people near the landfill, while acknowledging that these conditions have not been proven to be caused by the landfill.
- He emphasized that opposing the permit does not mean refusing to work with Waste Management. He said the city should continue cooperating with the company, particularly on leachate issues.
- He said the upcoming ADEQ public hearing was an important opportunity for residents to voice their concerns.
- He argued that the council has a responsibility to listen to citizens and put their interests first.
- He expressed concern about proposed changes to air-quality limits and said the current evidence did not justify granting the air permit.
- He asked fellow council members to vote yes on the resolution as a way of demonstrating concern about the permit while remaining willing to work with Waste Management.

Bottom line: Councilman Burress framed the resolution as a way for the council to formally express serious concerns about the air permit and stand with residents, while emphasizing that the city remains willing to cooperate with Waste Management rather than simply trying to shut the company down.

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve the resolution opposing the Waste Management Expansion.

Second by Mike Washkowiak

Craig Graves Voted- NO

Mick Wagner Voted- NO

Daniel Montez Voted- NO

Larry Ardemagni Voted- YES

Mike Washkowiak Voted- NO

Tim Burress- Voted- YES

4 Votes- NO to 2 Votes- YES

Motion Fails

D. A discussion and approval of a Resolution approving Grant application for North Barrington. Sponsored by: Mick

The council discussed and approved a resolution authorizing a grant application for North Barrington.

- The resolution was described as a procedural requirement for pursuing certain federal grants.
- James requested that the council sponsor the resolution.
- Councilman Wagner characterized it as a straightforward step needed to qualify for and receive potential grant funding.
- The recommendation was essentially: vote yes unless the council does not want the grant money.

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve the Resolution approving Grant application for North Barrington.

Second by Mike Washkowiak

Motion Passes Unanimously

E. A discussion and approval of a Resolution approving Grant application for Harmon/Wildcat Creek. Sponsored by: Mick

Councilman Wagner said it was essentially the same situation as the previous grant item.

- The grant application requires formal action by the City Council.
- Councilman Wagner encouraged the council to vote in favor of the resolution.

Bottom line: It was procedural approval needed to pursue the grant, with no major policy changes discussed.

Larry Ardemagni motioned to approve the Resolution approving Grant application for Harmon/Wildcat Creek.

Second by Mike Washkowiak

Motion Passes Unanimously

F. A discussion of an Ordinance to establish a Director of Parks, Museum, and Grants. Sponsored by: Mick

Main purpose:

- Narrow and clearly define the position's responsibilities.
- Have the director report directly to the mayor.
- Eliminate confusion about whether the position functions like a city administrator or city manager.

Three primary responsibilities:

- Parks and recreation — oversee parks, facilities, programs, events, and related operations.
- City museum — provide administrative oversight of the museum and cultural/historical programs.
- Grant coordination — help all city departments identify grants, prepare applications, track deadlines, handle documentation, reimbursements, and reporting.

A key point was that the director would assist other departments with grants but would not take over their operational authority. Departments receiving grants would remain responsible for their own technical decisions, projects, and compliance.

The proposal also:

- Allows potential cross-training and sharing of staff between parks and the museum when appropriate.
- Clarifies that the museum is a municipal operation, with city employees subject to city oversight.
- Establishes that museum advisory groups or historical organizations would not supervise city employees or control city funds unless specifically authorized by ordinance.
- Sets up clearer accountability and measurable performance expectations.
- Does not create an additional employee position or automatically increase compensation or funding; it changes the existing Community Development Director role.
- Calls for adopting a formal job description as part of the ordinance.

Bottom line: The proposal is primarily an organizational restructuring designed to replace a broad, potentially confusing Community Development Director role with a clearly defined Parks, Museum, and Grants director, while preventing the position from informally becoming a city administrator/general manager.

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve the Ordinance to establish a Director of Parks, Museum, and Grants.

Second by Mick Wagner

Motion Passes Unanimously

Mike Waskowiak motioned to approve the Emergency Clause.

Second by Mick Wagner

Motion Passes Unanimously

**G. A discussion of an Ordinance establishing the Public Works Department and Director.
Sponsored by: Mick**

The proposal would clarify and formally define the role of the Public Works Director, separating it from the city's Water and Sewer Department.

- Previously, the Public Works Director position included responsibility for water, sewer, and streets.
- An earlier ordinance established the Water and Sewer Department as a separate department, making the current change necessary to clarify Public Works' responsibilities.
- The Public Works Director would focus on:
 - Streets
 - Road rights-of-way
 - Storm drainage
 - Traffic-control devices
 - Other public infrastructure
- The director would also work closely with the floodplain administrator.
- The change is intended to create separate accountability and specialized leadership for Public Works and Water/Sewer.
- The speaker emphasized that this does not expand Public Works into utility operations; instead, it recognizes that the two areas have evolved into separate municipal functions.
- The change is part of a broader effort to establish clearly defined department heads and reporting responsibilities across the city.

Bottom line: The ordinance separates streets, drainage, and other public infrastructure from water and sewer, giving each area its own clearly defined department leadership and accountability.

Mike Waskowiak motioned to approve the Ordinance establishing the Public Works Department and Director.

Second by Mick Wagner

Craig Graves Voted- YES

Mick Wagner Voted- YES

Daniel Montez Voted- YES

Larry Ardemagni Voted- ABSTAIN

Mike Washkowiak Voted- YES

Tim Burress- Voted- YES

5 Votes- YES to 1 Vote- ABSTAIN

Motion Passes

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve the Emergency Clause.
Second by Daniel Montez

Motion Passes Unanimously

H. A discussion and approval of an Ordinance clarifying Governance of the Tontitown Historical Museum. Sponsored by: Mick

The proposed ordinance would clarify the legal and administrative structure of the Tontitown Museum, particularly the relationship between the city, museum staff, and the volunteer museum board.

Main changes:

- Renames the existing Museum Commission as the Tontitown Museum Board of Trustees to make clear that it is an advisory/governance body rather than an independent statutory commission.
- Establishes that paid museum employees are city employees, subject to the city's hiring, payroll, benefits, personnel policies, and administrative procedures.
- Museum employees would not be employees of the board. The museum director/curator would report to the mayor or a designated city department head.
- The city council would retain control over the museum's budget, public funds, contracts, purchases, grants, and donations.
- The board would continue to have an important role in historical preservation, collections, exhibits, interpretation, long-term planning, and community involvement.
- The board could participate in selecting a museum director or curator when requested by the mayor.
- Museum collections would receive additional protection through formal collection-management policies, with council approval required.
- The board could create bylaws, but they would require city attorney review and City Council approval.
- The museum would be required to submit an annual work plan and performance report, including information such as operating hours, visitor activity, and workload. Councilman Wagner emphasized that visitor counts alone shouldn't determine staffing needs because much museum work happens behind the scenes.
- The proposed structure is modeled in part on the Shiloh Museum/Springdale municipal museum structure, where museum employees are city employees and an appointed board provides oversight and community participation.

Why the change is being proposed: Councilman Wagner said existing ordinances, bylaws, and actual city practices don't clearly answer basic questions such as who hires, supervises, evaluates, disciplines, and pays museum employees; who controls the budget; and what authority the volunteer board actually has.

Bottom line: The ordinance is intended to remove ambiguity and establish clear lines of authority: the museum remains a city operation, the council controls public money and municipal authority, city administration handles employees, and the volunteer board focuses on historical and cultural guidance rather than day-to-day personnel management.

Tim Burress motioned to approve the Ordinance clarifying Governance of the Tontitown Historical Museum.

Second by Daniel Montez

Motion Passes Unanimously

Daniel Montez motioned to approve the Emergency Clause.

Second by Mick Wagner

Motion Passes Unanimously

I. A discussion and approval of a Resolution authorizing Tree Removal on South Barrington. Sponsored by: Mick

The council discussed approving tree removal on South Barrington to allow a water-infrastructure project to proceed.

- The project requires removal of abandoned water lines and trees in the city right-of-way so the area can be properly sloped.
- Three bids were obtained:
- Highest: \$32,850
- Lowest: \$20,865
- One additional bid between those amounts.
- All bidders reportedly submitted the required insurance documentation.
- Councilman Wagner suggested using the lowest bidder, unless there was a legitimate reason to believe that contractor was unreliable or unqualified.
- The three companies were identified as Tree Inscares, Monster Tree Service, and Prairie Grove Tree Service.
- The contract would apparently need to be reviewed/approved by the city attorney.
- The resolution was being brought forward so the tree-removal work could be authorized and the larger water project could move forward without delay.

Bottom line: The council was being asked to authorize tree removal needed for a water-line project, with the \$20,865 lowest bid appearing to be the likely choice, subject to appropriate contract review.

Mick Wagner motioned to approve the Resolution authorizing Tree Removal on South Barrington.

Second by Daniel Montez

Motion Fails Unanimously

J. A discussion and appointment of standing committee officers as outlined in Ordinance No. 2026-07-1316. Sponsored by: Mick

Discussion Only

Council members are expected to select the committees they want to serve on and bring their choices to the next City Council meeting for consideration.

K. A discussion and approval of a Resolution accepting the low bid for the construction of the Police Department. Sponsored by: Mick

The council reviewed bids for a construction project following a properly issued Request for Qualifications (RFQ) with a defined scope of services.

- The bids were reviewed by architect Timothy Maddox.
- Southern Brothers Construction submitted the lowest bid at \$4,968,715.
- The bid was certified as valid.
- The council was being presented with the low bid for consideration.

Mick Wagner motioned to approve the Resolution accepting the low bid for the construction of the Police Department.

Second by Larry Ardemagni

Motion Passes Unanimously

L. A discussion and approval of an Ordinance establishing the position of Accounting Clerk. Sponsored by: Mick

The council discussed an ordinance formally establishing the position of City Clerk and clarifying its job requirements and reporting structure.

- The ordinance was prompted by confusion surrounding the existing clerk/treasurer and clerk positions.
- Previous documents reportedly suggested that the person holding the clerk position needed a finance degree, which the current officeholder does not have.

- The ordinance includes a formal job description intended to eliminate that ambiguity.
- The goal is to establish clear qualifications and responsibilities so the city can move forward without conflicting or unclear documentation.

Bottom line: The ordinance is primarily a clarification of the City Clerk position, its duties, qualifications, and organizational structure, particularly to resolve the question about a required finance degree.

Mike Washkowiak motion to approve the Ordinance establishing the position of Accounting Clerk.

Second by Tim Burress

Motion Passes Unanimously

M. A discussion and approval of an Ordinance establishing the position of Water and Sewer Director. Sponsored by: Mick

- The position was technically created about two months earlier.
- What was missing was a formal job description defining the position's duties and responsibilities.
- Councilman Wagner brought the item forward with help from someone experienced in personnel matters to establish that job description.
- Councilman Wagner asked the council for a favorable vote.

Bottom line: The position already existed; this action mainly formally defines the job through an official job description.

Mike Washkowiak motioned to approve the Ordinance establishing the position of Water and Sewer Director.

Second by Danile Montez

Motion Passes Unanimously

10) Closing Comments

Daniel Montez

- Thanking everyone for attending the lengthy meeting.
- Acknowledging that several important and personally significant issues were discussed.
- Saying they try to carefully consider every perspective and angle before voting.
- Explaining that pauses or hesitation during votes may reflect being torn between competing viewpoints, rather than indecision or lack of attention.
- Thanking residents for trusting them to serve on the council.

Bottom line: A closing statement emphasizing careful, thoughtful decision-making and appreciation for the community's trust.

Larry Ardemagni

- Thanked those who stayed and encouraged them to enjoy the Great Festival's chicken and spaghetti.
- Joked about who served the food and praised the meal.
- Referenced the previous speaker's pauses, joking that they were “for effect” rather than deep contemplation.
- Ended by yielding their time.

Bottom line: A casual, humorous closing remark acknowledging the long meeting and the community festival.

Tim Burress

- Sharing that they attended the Grape Festival and enjoyed the grape ice cream.
- Reporting that a citizen texted them around 8:35 p.m. saying the Waste Management landfill was producing a strong odor that evening.
- Advising residents to be aware of the odor if driving near the landfill.
- Encouraging anyone with concerns about the landfill to attend the upcoming ADEQ public-comment meeting at St. Joseph's Hall next Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.

Bottom line: Councilman Burress highlighted a new citizen complaint about landfill odors and urged residents to attend the upcoming ADEQ hearing/public-comment session to voice concerns.

Mike Washkoia

- Thanking residents for staying through the long meeting.
- Noting that the current council members running for the next year's council were unopposed.
- Mentioning upcoming changes involving a council resignation and the mayor's choice of a replacement.
- Joking that the lack of challengers could mean either the council is doing a good job or nobody wants the job.
- Saying the council listens to residents, sometimes disagrees, but generally maintains respectful relationships despite disagreements.
- Thanking everyone again and saying they would see everyone in two weeks.

Bottom line: The meeting ended with appreciation for residents, acknowledgment of upcoming council changes, and a message that the council intends to continue working together respectfully and listening to citizens.

Mayor Russell

- Announced the Bocce Ball tournament on September 12 and encouraged residents to participate.
- Expressed disappointment that the council's air-permit resolution did not pass, saying the landfill air-quality issue is serious and affects residents' health and families.
- Urged citizens to attend the ADEQ public-comment meeting on August 25 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church Hall and speak about their concerns.
- Emphasized that residents should make their voices heard regarding the proposed five-year air permit.

Bottom line: Mayor Russell promoted the upcoming community event but primarily used the closing to urge residents to speak at the August 25 ADEQ hearing about the landfill's proposed air permit and air-quality concerns.

11) Adjournment- All in Favor

PASSED AND APPROVED this ____ day of _____ 2025.

APPROVED: _____
Angela Russell, Mayor

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

Sponsor (Initiated By): _____

Motion to Introduce Made By: _____

Seconded By: _____

Adopted / Passed: _____

Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____ Abstain _____ Absent _____