CITY OF MULBERRY, ARKANSAS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – June 16, 2026

The scheduled meeting of the Mulberry City Council convened at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Center, 606 Church Avenue, Mulberry.

Gary D. Baxter, Mayor
Carla Dickerson, Recorder/Treasurer

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Seth Fisher, Ward 1 Position 1
Jake Copeland, Ward 2 Position 1
Kimberly Bruce, Ward 2 Position 2
Daimien Sadat Rice, Ward 3 Position 1
Jeff Marvin, Ward 3 Position 2

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ronnie Adams, Ward 1 Position 2

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Hurley, Executive Assistant to the Mayor
Carla Dickerson, Recorder/Treasurer
Melissa Sampson, Director of Finance
Shannon Gregory, Police Chief
Thell Riddle, Police Officer
Alex Walker, Public Works Director
Jason Sumpter, Fire Chief
Tammy Watts, Branch Director of the Ralph D. Graf Library of Mulberry
Adam Tolleson
Laci Tolleson
Mandy Oestreich
Scott Oestreich
Kay Baxter
Atziry Pina Diaz
Andel Pina
Antonio Garcia

Call to Order

Mayor Baxter called the Mulberry City Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Baxter offered the opening prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call

Steve Hurley, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, called the roll:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Seth Fisher, Ward 1 Position 1
Jake Copeland, Ward 2 Position 1
Kimberly Bruce, Ward 2 Position 2
Daimien Sadat Rice, Ward 3 Position 1
Jeff Marvin, Ward 3 Position 2

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ronnie Adams, Ward 1 Position 2

With five out of six Council Members present, a quorum was established.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the May regular minutes and May financial statements. No corrections were noted.

Motion: Jeff Marvin
Second: Seth Fisher
Vote: Approved unanimously (Seth Fisher-yes, Jake Copeland-yes, Daimien Sad Rice-yes, Kimberly Bruce-yes, Jeff Marvin-yes)

Departmental Reports

Police Department – Police Chief Shannon Gregory

- 149 calls for service in May
- Fifty-five traffic stops with seventeen citations issued
- Four arrests
- 699 building checks conducted
- Twenty-seven cleanup orders issued

Special Recognition – Mulberry Medal of Life Saving Valor

Mayor Baxter presented the Mulberry Medal of Life Saving Valor to Police Chief Shannon Gregory and Officer Thell Riddle in recognition of their actions on June 14, 2026, at Bluff Hole, where they responded to a swift-water emergency and rescued four juveniles who had been swept away by the current. Mayor Baxter also read letters from community members commending the Police Department, including a letter recognizing Officer Riddle's assistance to a motorist who experienced a tire blowout on the interstate.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Jason Sumpter

- Nineteen total calls in May (fourteen medical, one motor vehicle accident, one rescue/rope call, two grass fires, one call canceled)
- Continuing preparations for the Independence Day fireworks event on June 27; tickets remain available
- Announced the Boots and Badges Blood Drive, co-sponsored with the Fire Department, on June 17 from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the library; donors receive a free t-shirt and choice of tickets to a Naturals game or a theme park
- Reported the department is finalizing a life vest program per Council's earlier inquiry

Public Works – Director Alex Walker

- Fifteen service calls in May
- Thirty-six meter readings
- Fourteen rechecks
- Eight water shut-offs performed
- 109 people participated in recycling

- No water leaks reported in May
- Discussed the pressure relief valve installed on First Street, which has reduced water leaks; two earlier incidents were traced to a contractor's solenoid installation that temporarily spiked system pressure
- Discussed a water main break at the water treatment plant on June 16, in which a contractor struck a 12-inch line between the clear well and the shut-off valve; city crews shut the valves at Wire Road as a precaution and repaired the line, with costs to be reimbursed by the contractor
- Arkansas Department of Health issued a precautionary boil order for six homes between the water treatment plant and Wire Road; all affected residents were notified

Additional Reports

Library – Library Director Tammy Watts

- Special program celebrating local talent on May 9, featuring music, maracas, sombreros, and tacos
- Field Trip Week held May 12–15, hosting first through fourth grade students from Marvin Elementary School
- Library Thrills program concluded May 18 with an ice cream sundae party
- Preparing for summer reading programs

Old Business

Ordinance 2026-04: Alcoholic Beverage Permit Process – Third and Final Reading

Motion to read by title only for third reading: Jeff Marvin
Second: Kimberly Bruce
Vote: Adopted unanimously (Seth Fisher-yes, Jake Copeland-yes, Daimien Sadat Rice-yes, Kimberly Bruce-yes, Jeff Marvin-yes)

Steve Hurley read Ordinance 2026-04 establishing a permitting process and privilege permit for selling or dispensing any controlled beverage within the City of Mulberry by businesses licensed by the state to sell alcoholic beverages, levying permit fees, and a city supplemental tax of 2% upon the annual gross receipts.

Representatives of a proposed restaurant (currently operating as Cantimplas in Sallisaw, Oklahoma) addressed the Council regarding plans to open a location at 3415 Highway 64, at the entrance to the Industrial Park, and requested the Council's consideration of an alcohol permit for the new location. Police Chief Gregory noted that a similarly permitted restaurant in Alma has operated without incident.

Finance Director Melissa Sampson reported that she had contacted the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration, which advised that the city may set a supplemental tax of up to 4% on beer and wine sales and up to 10% on mixed drinks.

Motion to amend the tax from 2% to 4% on all alcoholic beverages, hard and soft: Jeff Marvin
Second: Seth Fisher
Vote: Adopted unanimously (Seth Fisher-yes, Jake Copeland-yes, Daimien Sadat Rice-yes, Kimberly Bruce-yes, Jeff Marvin-yes)

Motion to approve Ordinance 2026-04 as amended: Jeff Marvin
Second: Seth Fisher
Vote: Adopted 4–0 with one abstention (Seth Fisher-yes, Jake Copeland-yes, Kimberly Bruce-yes, Jeff Marvin-yes, Daimien Sadat Rice-abstain)

New Business

Resolution 2026-13: Purchase of Police Body-Worn Cameras

Steve Hurley read Resolution 2026-13 authorizing the Mulberry Police Department to purchase replacement body-worn camera equipment in the amount of $24,013.07, consistent with the quote summary attached as Exhibit A, with the full purchase price to be paid from the City of Mulberry Sales Tax Account designated for public safety expenditures. Mayor Baxter noted that the Public Safety Fund had sufficient designated funds available, and that the department's current body-worn camera equipment has become unreliable, with officers sharing equipment due to failures.

Motion to approve: Kimberly Bruce
Second: Daimien Sadat Rice
Vote: Adopted unanimously (Seth Fisher-yes, Jake Copeland-yes, Daimien Sadat Rice-yes, Kimberly Bruce-yes, Jeff Marvin-yes)

Mayor's Project Updates

Mayor Baxter provided photographs and updates on ongoing city projects. Concrete work has begun at the Industrial Park entrance on Highway 64, with the contractor under contract through December 31 to complete the project. The Ninth Street paving project removed four inches of the existing roadway and replaced it with two inches of Class 7 base and two inches of asphalt. The Water Treatment Plant is nearing substantial completion, with the automated control system expected to be operational within about a week; the facility continues to run on manual operation in the meantime. A pre-construction meeting for the sewer extension project near Marvin Elementary School to serve Workman's was postponed due to the water main incident at the treatment plant, but the project remains on the timeline requested by Workman's; easements are being finalized by the project engineer. The sidewalk project from the City Council Center to Dollar General Market remains with the project engineers.

Council Comments and Announcements

Council Member Sadat Rice reported on a recent Alma Chamber of Commerce meeting discussing Issue 3, a measure that will appear on the November 2026 statewide ballot addressing infrastructure financing options, including tax rebate arrangements for developer-funded utility extensions, and encouraged fellow Council Members to review the measure. He also asked about the status of the electric gate at the water treatment plant; Mayor Baxter reported that the gate has been installed and that access codes are being finalized for authorized personnel.

Citizens Signed Up to Speak

No citizens signed up to speak.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion: Jeff Marvin
Second: Daimien Sadat Rice
Vote: Adopted unanimously (Seth Fisher-yes, Jake Copeland-yes, Daimien Sadat Rice-yes, Kimberly Bruce-yes, Jeff Marvin-yes)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. The next regularly scheduled City Council meeting will be on July 21, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

These minutes were taken by: Steve Hurley

Gary D. Baxter, Mayor

Carla Dickerson, Recorder/Treasurer