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Tuesday, June 16, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Athens Council to Vote on Budgets, Equipment Purchases, and Key Ordinances Tuesday



The Athens City Council will meet in regular session **Tuesday, June 16 at 6 p.m.** at City Hall to take up a full agenda that includes school system budget amendments, major public safety equipment purchases, and second readings of three ordinances involving towing regulations, rezoning, and adoption of the city's 2026–27 budget and tax rate.

Council is expected to consider a **consent agenda** that includes approval of Athens City Schools budget actions, the Athens Utilities Board's FY 2027 budget and five-year plan, and funding for a new fire engine, two animal control trucks, and new police duty weapons. Also up for approval is a grant application for the statewide School Resource Officer program and a contract increase for the Heritage Park improvement project. A reappointment to the Athens Municipal Regional Planning Commission is also listed.

Three public hearings and second readings are scheduled: **Ordinance 1156**, a full rewrite of the city's towing services regulations; **Ordinance 1157**, a rezoning request for a 3-acre parcel on Denso Drive; and **Ordinance 1158**, which adopts the FY 2026–27 city budget and sets the property tax rate.

Under new business, council will review the bid award for **Fire Station No. 3**, consider additional parking at Cook Park, take up a proposed ordinance establishing **mayor and council compensation**, and discuss the vacant **City Manager position**. Monthly reports from the Finance, Fire, and Police departments are also scheduled, along with a review of the FY 2025–26 year from the City Manager.

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Traveling TN250 Exhibit Coming to Etowah June 18–July 29

The Etowah Historical Commission and the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association will host the Tennessee Semiquincentennial Commission's traveling exhibit, "Our American Story: Voices from Tennessee," at the Nancy Cantrell Dender Gallery in downtown Etowah from June 18 through July 29, 2026. Created for Tennessee's commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, the exhibit highlights influential Tennesseans whose lives and contributions helped shape both the state and the nation. Through interpretive displays, visitors can explore the people, events, and experiences that connect Tennessee's heritage to the broader American story. The exhibit is free and open to the public, with gallery hours Thursday–Saturday, 1–7 p.m., and additional visits available by appointment.

The Tennessee Semiquincentennial—known as TN250—encourages communities to preserve and share the stories that have defined the state over the past 250 years. The Nancy Cantrell Dender Gallery continues its mission of showcasing regional art, culture, and history. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association at 423-263-7232 or visit: TennesseeOverhill.com.

Community News You Can Use

- This is the final week to sign up for the City of Athens Adult Co-Ed Softball League; **registration closes Monday, June 22**. Games begin June 30 on Tuesday nights at Athens Regional Park. Cost is \$400 per team or \$30 for free agents (ages 16+). Register online [HERE](#), by phone at 423-744-2704, or in person at City Hall.
- The Athens Municipal Building, Public Works, Recycle Center, and Animal Shelter will be **closed Friday, June 19** for Juneteenth. Most facilities reopen **Monday, June 22**; the Recycle Center reopens **Saturday, June 20**. Friday's residential garbage route will run **Monday, June 22**. Emergency services remain 24/7. For details, call 423-744-2745.
- The McMinn County Historical Society and Archives will hold a dedication ceremony for the new Tennessee Historical Commission marker honoring Gov. DeWitt Clinton Senter on **Thursday, June 18 at 1 p.m.** at the corner of Hwy 305 and County Road 220. Limited parking available at **720 County Road 220**; carpooling encouraged. Local officials and historians will offer brief remarks.

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Moofest 2026: A Resounding Success

The proverbial dust has settled, reports have been filed and the results are in – MooFest 2026 can be called a community success with over 18,000 in attendance! And that success is due to the countless weeks, days and hours of planning and implementation on the part of our presenting sponsors, corporate sponsors, 325 vendors, entertainers, activities and Team Moo committee members!

First off, I'd like to give a big Moo-out to our AgAvenue sponsor Mayfield Dairy Farms. Special thanks to Elisha Elliott and Angie Melhorn for coordinating a great day of tribute to our area dairy farmers. From the Maggie Strut to the fun filled AgAvenue in Market Park, it was a great way to celebrate our dairy rich heritage in a fun and informative way. We are so appreciative of the many folks who were under the big tent and at Market Pavilion who contributed so much to the festival: McMinn County 4-H, McMinn County FFA, The Dairy Alliance and Dr. Kerri Prince DeBusk with her mini herd of dairy cows. Thank you for all the behind-the-scenes support that doesn't always get its due recognition.

A festival is made up of many moving parts and we're fortunate to have several community groups participating this year. The Athens Lions Club's 18th Annual Moo Run kicked off the day at Eureka Trail with 66 runners and 10 walkers with all proceeds going to vision programs sponsored by the club. The McMinn Regional Humane Society sponsored an adopt-a-thon at Fullers Frame Shop and the McMinn Education Foundation signed up several families for their Imagination Library program and gave out many books at the Let's Read 20 Colorful Bus.

A festival of this magnitude is only as good as its committee and the Friendly City Festival MooFest group is one of the best when it comes to throwing a party! Their "whatever it takes" attitude certainly made my life easier and putting on a festival a breeze.

Thank you to Joel Webb, Integrity Sound Solutions, for balancing sound needs for the Courthouse Steps, Market Pavilion and Madison Avenue stages. Festival goers were certainly entertained by Jim Brooks with his grandson Rafe Paul followed by Trevin Wade, Faith Willin', Clinch River Ramblers, Wilson and Cross and Steve Lewis on the Courthouse Steps Stage.

JCreek Cloggers started the line up at the Market Pavilion Stage followed by three Mayfield Contests/Games, Run, Katie Run and Cole Sitzlar kicking off the 2026 Sounds of Summer Season. And Inspirations Dance and Gymnastics Studio dazzled with three performances on the Madison Avenue Stage.

Special thanks go to Austin Fesmire for taking on the daunting task of coordinating logistics/vendor check-in and helping put out the inevitable fires that happen with an event this size along with Anthony Raper. Thanks to Athens City Parks and Recreation for installing the portable electric panels, delivering the Market Pavilion stage and Simon Rhodes, Communications Director for The City, for social media marketing.

We are thankful for the use of tables and chairs graciously loaned to us by the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum. Joy Early/McMinn County Mayor's Office gave us invaluable back up with logistics and coordinating the County Inmate Work Detail for delivering and picking up tables and chairs from the Museum. Thanks, Grace House, for making quick work out of breaking down the tables and chairs after the festival. And we appreciate Rick Lay for letting us store the tables and chairs in his building on Madison.

Applause for Ben Burchfield and the entire staff of Public Works for scheduling street closings, working on the vendor booth map and space markings, dumpster delivery and trash pick up. Special thanks to the best booth space marking crew around-Cadence Washam, Ben and Stefani Burchfield with special appearance by Basil, Brianna and Harper Baker, Amy Sullins, Chelsey Willson, Michael Priest, Jessica Klaaren and Deb Willson.

Kudos to Breanna Baker, Michael Priest and Stefani Burchfield for the countless hours they spent coordinating vendors, spread sheets, maps and vendor check-in. Their hands on experience certainly made things go smoothly for our 325 vendors and we couldn't have a festival without them! Special thanks to Jonathon and Asa Womac, Teresa Allen Schlandt, Austin Fesmire, Michael Priest and Hugh and Chelsey Willson for making sure vendor check-in went smoothly and questions were answered. And Leanne Malloy/Athens Web Designs made sure Friendly City Festival's website was informative and up to date.

MooFest is produced by Friendly City Festivals, a 501©3 subsidiary of Willsonthropic, Inc.

Our heartfelt thanks to our corporate sponsors who, thanks to their generous support, enable us to present these festivals free of charge: The City of Athens Tourism Fund, McMinn County Tourism Board, Madison Avenue Pharmacy, Athens Kiwanis Club, Mayfield Dairy Farms, Tennessee Overhill, Tennessee Arts Commission, Athens Insurance, East Tennessee Entertainment, Kona Ice, Let's Bounce Rentals, Pendleton's Playground, Athens Insurance, Valley Oil, WarrenJackson CPAs, Simmons National Bank, Simmons Private Wealth Group, Citizens National Bank of Sevier County, VEC Customer Shares, DENSO, Starr Regional Medical Center, Smile More Orthodontics, The Financial Mart, REMAX Freedom Realty, KARM Stores and River Valley Health.

Media and public relations support came from: The Morning Fax, The Daily Post-Athenian, The Monroe County Advocate Democrat, WBIR Channel 10 and WCLE Mix 104.1 FM.

As you can see, it truly takes a community to pull off an endeavor such as this and no one does it better than McMinn County and Athens, Tennessee. Be sure to join us for the remainder of the 14th Annual Sounds of Sumer concert series; July 4th -Mending Wall at Athens Regional Park before the fireworks, July 18th -Dexter Thomas Band at Market Pavilion, August 8th -Scenic City Sound at Market Pavilion and August 15th -Confederate Railroad at Athens Regional Park! AND, everyone's fall favorite Pumpkintown is scheduled for Saturday, October 10th.

Written and Submitted by Meredith Willson, Friendly City Festivals

Photo Gallery on Next Page

Moofest Photos (Courtesy of Gerri McIlvane)



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McMinn County Arrest Reports

Obituaries

June 13, 2026

Brock Anderson, 36 of Niota, charged with domestic assault, false imprisonment, interference with 911 calls, and resisting stop, Bond \$17,000.

Kayla Stiles, 27 of Cleveland, charged with failure to appear for possession of fentanyl for resale, Bond \$64,000.

Randall Bledsoe, 26 of Reliance, charged with violation of probation, Bond \$2,643.

Shoney McNair Langford, 48 of Farmington, Missouri, charged with DUI, violation of implied consent law, possession of schedule 2 hydrocodone, Bond \$6,000.

Joan Green, 38 of Etowah, charged with custodial interference, Bond \$2,000.

Edith Brown, 69 of Austin, Texas, charged with disorderly conduct, Bond \$1,000.

Christopher Cook, 50 of Athens, charged with schedule 6 and schedule 4, public intoxication, and drug paraphernalia.

The accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Information gathered using Public Sources.

Benjamin Mitchell Schultz, 45, passed away on Monday, June 8 in Bradley County, TN. Survivors and funeral arrangements to be announced by M.D. Dotson and Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Cleveland.

M. Alice Bates Hunt, 89, of Etowah, passed away on Saturday, June 13. She attended Salem Baptist Church in Halls, TN. Private services will be held. Bordwine Funeral Home in charge of arrangements

Don Allen Hassler, passed away Saturday, June 13. Survivors and funeral arrangements to be announced by M D Dotson and Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service - Cleveland Tn.



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