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call us!**Monday, July 13, 2026****Page 1****Athens, Tennessee**

Athens City Council to Review Wide Range of Projects at July 13 Work Session



The Athens City Council will meet for a work session on Monday, July 13 at 5 p.m., taking up a full slate of financial, infrastructure, parks, and public safety items. The meeting will open with communications and presentations before moving into an extensive discussion agenda.

Council members will review a reimbursement resolution presented by Cumberland Securities, followed by a Public Entity Partners Safety Partners Grant application. The agenda also includes proposed TDOT entrance improvements at Congress Parkway and Lee Drive, and a bid award for roadway work on View Street and repairs on North Jackson Street.

Several professional services agreements are scheduled for discussion, including contracts for a citywide Parks Master-plan, Cook Park parking improvements, and road intersection upgrades. Council will also consider a proposal for special inspections tied to construction of Fire Station No. 3.

Additional items include the purchase of new municipal court case-management software, police vehicles, revised pricing for animal control trucks, and equipment for police vehicles. Council will also vote on declaring a 2008 Ford Expedition as surplus property and review information related to fire equipment antitrust litigation.

The work session will feature the first reading of an ordinance establishing compensation for the mayor and councilmembers, as well as a zoning amendment to reclassify property off Spruce Street from I-1 Light Industrial to R-2 Medium Density Residential. Councilmember items include discussions on AI data centers and cryptocurrency mining, a letter of recommendation for Dr. Randall Dowling, the former North City School property, a review of the city's travel policy, and updates on the Sounds of Summer concerts at Athens Regional Park.

No new board or committee applications are on file, though vacancies remain on the Board of Adjustments & Appeals and the Historic Preservation Commission. The meeting will conclude with new business and adjournment.

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•Thu: Athens @ Family Dollar

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Monday, July 13, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Brush Fire Contained on County Road 479 in Englewood



Englewood Rural Fire crews were called to a brush fire Thursday around 2:30 p.m. on County Road 479 after a property owner's brush burn escaped containment. Firefighters reported that roughly half an acre burned before the flames were brought under control. No injuries were reported, and crews ensured the area was fully extinguished. *Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD*

Community News You Can Use

- The Isaiah 117 House Lemonade Stand Challenge is coming up July 17–19, with a goal of 117 stands. They currently have 89 registered, and there's still time to join. Sign up to host a stand and support children entering foster care at: support.isaiah117house.com/event/lemonade-host-sign-up-monroe-mcminn/e781226.
- The Athens Area Council for the Arts invites McMinn and surrounding county residents to enter its annual Open Exhibit. The entry deadline is August 26, 2026. Divisions include High School, College (both free), and Open (\$10 per piece). Details and the prospectus are available at: athensartscouncil.org/open-exhibit-prospectus.
- The McMinn County Commissioners will meet in Regular Session in the Blue Room of the McMinn County Courthouse in Athens on Monday, July 20 at 6pm.
- Former Athens Area Council for the Arts Director, Ellen Kimball, was appointed as Interim Executive Director of AACA and The Arts Center on Monday, July 6. Kimball replaces former Director, Lauren Brown, who recently resigned to take a position in Cleveland.

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Athens, Tennessee

Soap Box Derby Week Begins!

The Athens Soap Box Derby champions are set to represent The Friendly City on the national stage in Akron, Ohio this week for the 88th running of the FirstEnergy All-American Soap Box Derby taking place on Saturday, July 18. Raylen Hembree (Super Stock Division) and Hannah Johnson (Stock Division) punched their tickets to Akron by winning the Athens title on Keith Lane back on May 30. Hembree is in the world famous "flower" car, sponsored by A&J Body Shop, while Johnson is in the Team Optimistic Pizza car powered by Domino's Pizza. Both racers are also sponsored by JTEKT. The Athens champs are joining the finest racers from across the globe to compete for Saturday's World Championship at historic Derby Downs.

Race week festivities began in downtown Akron as the Akron Rubberducks welcomed the champs to their baseball game Saturday night. Sunday was a working day for the racers with check-in, spindle alignment, axle triangulation, photo shoots, and practice runs down the track. Both Raylen and Hannah's cars received VIP status due to the hard work of both drivers and the racing team back in Athens. They each enjoyed a trail run down the track and felt the cars handled it well despite the sweltering heat. The champs will enjoy a welcome party on today as they begin their weeklong journey to bring home a world championship. Sponsors for this year's Soap Box Derby championship are: A&J Body Shop, Athens Barn Center, Athens Utilities Board, Dynasty Spas, NAPA Auto Parts, and Starr Heart and Vascular Clinic. Click or Tap [HERE](#) for Photos by Derek Phillips.

McMinn County Arrest Reports

July 03, 2026

Ethan Rutland, 36 of Athens, charged with aggravated assault against a first responder, vandalism, resisting stop, and disorderly conduct, Bond \$140,000.

Nicholas Newman, 27 of Decatur, charged with aggravated assault, Bond \$30,000.

Christopher Roseberry, 32 of Cincinnati, Ohio, charged with robbery.

Jonathan Ballew, 22 of Ten Mile, charged with aggravated assault, Bond \$30,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Information gathered using public sources.

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Monday, July 13, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Joseph "Joe" Kross 87, of Athens, passed away peacefully on Thursday, July 9. He served in the US Army and trained as a draftsman at a drafting school in Pittsburgh, PA. A visitation will be held on Tuesday, July 14 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at St. Mary Catholic Church in Athens. A Funeral Mass will follow from 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., with a reception afterward for family and friends. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens is honored to serve the family of Joseph "Joe" Kross.

Robyn Bunch Morrison, 56, passed away on Thursday, July 9. The family will receive friends from 5 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15 in the Chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the family of Robyn Bunch Morrison.

Carolyn Ann Mullins, 66, of Athens, passed away on Wednesday, July 8. The family will hold a private service for family at a later date. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

Ernest Theodore Westfield, 75, of Chattanooga, passed away on Wednesday, July 8. Survivors and funeral services to be announced by M.D. Dotson and Sons Funeral Home & Cremation

Service of Cleveland.

Nichole "Nickie" Leigh Ann Ziegler Shaffer, 46, of Meigs County, passed away on Thursday, July 9. She was a member of Shiloh Baptist Church. Visitation and a funeral service were held Sunday afternoon at Ziegler Funeral Home. Interment took place at Beta Cemetery in Decatur. Ziegler Funeral Home was entrusted with serving the family of Nichole Leigh Ann Ziegler Shaffer.

Donna Sue Wilson, 70 of Athens, passed away on Thursday July 9. Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home with Dr. David Lones officiating. The family will receive friends from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Wednesday prior to the service. Interment will follow the service at McMinn Memory Gardens. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

Sherry Farrell Guffey, 74, of Niota, passed away on Friday, July 3rd. She co-owned The Floor Store of Athens alongside her husband, Glenn. In accordance with her wishes, no formal services will be held at this time. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

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