

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
CITY OF ORLINDA, TENNESSEE
CITY COUNCIL**

May 14, 2026

Orlinda City Hall
Meeting Room
7501 Highway 52
Orlinda, Tennessee

The Orlinda City Council met in regular session at 7:00 pm on Thursday, May 14, 2026 in the meeting room located at Orlinda City Hall, 7501 Highway 52, Orlinda, Tennessee.

Members attending were as follows:

Mayor Tabitha Swearingen
Vice Mayor Ben Ellis
Commissioner Sherry Carver
Commissioner Jennifer Johnson

Others present included City Manager Tammie Carey, and Fire Chief Patrick Darrow as well as members of the public.

Mayor Tabitha Swearingen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led with the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Ellis and seconded by Commissioner Carver to approve the minutes of the Orlinda City Council April 9th, 2026 regular meeting. Voting Aye: All. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report was presented. Mayor Swearingen asked if the budget has been oriented in a similar fashion as previous years. Carey states that there have been new subcategories included in the budget proposal which would present the budget more granularly. It will still have the same categories.

Carey asked council how many years previous they would like to view for the budget to actual. Council agreed for three to four years.

FIRE REPORT

As Fire Chief Patrick Darrow was absent due to a fire call, City Manager Carey indicated that she and Darrow had met to discuss the capital expenditures to add to the fire report. Vice Mayor Ellis asked are the full time volunteer firefighters being paid for calls while they are on the clock. Carey stated that there is one person that does 1-2 on-call shifts per week, but no regular shifts just on-call. When Carey receives the pay report at the end of the month, it is her understanding that the fire chief has reviewed the firefighters' schedules and looked at when they were working versus when the call came in and was completed. From there, Darrow determines the amount of runs. Commissioner Johnson states that to her understanding, pay is going off of a run sheet.

City Manager Carey states Safety Day, that was on May 2nd, 2026, raised a substantial amount of money in donations from local businesses. The donation money was used to purchase bicycles, helmets, and other give-a-ways as well as the cost to have bouncy houses and activities for the kids. She thanked the council for their attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Citizen Wesley Jordan came forward and stated that he attended a meeting with some people in town and the others expressed concerns on matters of the dissolution of Orlinda. Jordan wanted to know if council members are making efforts to reach out and connect with the community. He loves this city and has lived around here since he was a little kid and doesn't want anything to happen to Orlinda and would like city council to get involved. Jordan mentioned that previous city manager Kevin Breeding has been mentioned in previous meetings and there is a lot of negative commentary behind him as well as city council in general. Previous City Manager Breeding has been mentioned being involved in the upcoming ditch project.

Mayor Swearingen responded by saying, Ms. Canon is not the first person to mention dissolving the city and it stems from zoning issues and if they are not able to achieve what they want to achieve then they want to get rid of city staff and replace them with a person who will do what they want to do. She stated that City Manager Kevin Breeding is incredibly knowledgeable and has a master's degree. That is why the city voted to keep him as a consultant. He is to assist the new City Manager until she feels comfortable in her role.

Mayor Swearingen clarified that Breeding has been hired as the paving manager because Carey was not well versed in this specific type of project. The city investigated hiring someone to oversee the paving projects and it was going to be extremely expensive to hire another person, so in attempts to save city money, Breeding was hired as paving manager specifically for the bid projects. Additionally, Breeding has been hired as a consultant for the city in the past. Commissioner Carver stepped in to clarify that Breeding is only paid for billable hours should city staff need direction on specific matters.

Commissioner Johnson clarified that she is not a supporter of previous City Manager Breeding but he has a lot of historical knowledge so when the new city manager has a question that she's not able to find the information on, it is in the best interest of the City of Orlinda for the city staff to be able to contact him and gain that historical knowledge.

Mayor Swearingen also stated that the city has maintained a level community outreach, examples being October in Orlinda, the Christmas event, Experience Robertson County, etc. Additionally, citizens have felt comfortable enough to stop by any one of the council members houses to speak on relevant city matters. Swearingen let Mr. Jordan know that the council appreciated him speaking and attending the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and/or possible action regarding lease of building at 1209 East Church Street.

Mayor Swearingen states that the city has an empty building, and rent is eventually being paid, but it's still an empty building because Senor Fajitas been closed since December due to ongoing struggles.

Commissioner Johnson stated that they're good for the community and they're trying to reopen in August.

Commissioner Carver suggested that they put up a sign to inform the public.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she will reach out to one of the owners and ask if she could update Google and put a sign on the door that says they're closed until further notice.

Mayor Swearingen stated that they are going to have to start paying rent on time because the last time it was three months and the city had to resort to sending letters and going to the owner's house. City Manager Carey clarified that since that time it has been paid. She added that if the payment was late that the late fee has also been paid.

Commissioner Carver asked if their lease is up at the end of May. Swearingen stated that it's month by month at this point. City Manager Carey stated that the original lease, that was located in the files, was signed in 2017. It was a 2 year lease.

Commissioner Johnson stated that there has been another lease agreement that was discussed in a meeting which extended the lease for five years. City Manager Carey stated that city staff will investigate further and review the minutes to understand their current lease agreement.

Discussion and/or possible action regarding landscaping city hall.

City Manager Carey stated that she met with two different nurseries and spoke with members of the community that were knowledgeable about plants to get ideas of plants that would be appropriate for the landscaping at City Hall. Carey put some of that information into ChatGPT and came up with a plan. Carey received 3 quotes on plants and two on the installation. She

thanked Vice Mayor Ellis for the removal of the old shrubs. She said the existing pea gravel will need to be removed prior to new plants being put in.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the installation cost is a necessary cost or is this also something that the staff that we have now can do. Carey stated that her recommendation would be to have it professionally installed given the physical demands of the project. She said it will take some time to dig all the holes by hand and move all the rock, which would be a multi-week project.

Commissioner Johnson asked what the budget for the project was. Carey stated that it was \$2,500 and the line item that indicates it in the budget is "other-miscellaneous"

There was continued discussion about the plant selection and the appropriate time of year to plant certain things.

No action was taken.

Discussion and/or possible action regarding 2026/27 Fiscal Year Budget.

Discussion regarding possible capital projects. The possible purchase of a fire truck and the restoration of the library were discussed.

City Manager Carey stated that she and Fire Chief Patrick Darrow had several conversations about types of vehicles. The sales rep for the company Safe Industries took a truck on a driving tour and brought the truck by city hall for preview. Carey went on to explain that the emission standards are changing which will impact the price of vehicles

Discussion of putting together bid specs for a truck or purchasing from the state price contract. .

Carey asked when the last fire truck was purchased. Commissioner Johnson states it was the tanker. She goes on to say that the council has said within the next year to two years this needs to be put into action given the current condition of all the machines and the lack of mechanical expertise that the city has. She said the city is in a position where it isn't a choice anymore as public safety is critical.

City Manager Carey states that in regard to the budget, a decision if the purchase of a new fire truck is included in the budget or not. If so, it needs to be determined where the money will flow from and how it will be reflected in the budget.

Commissioner Johnson pointed out that with the purchase of a new \$1,000,000 fire truck the city would need to ensure that the firefighters have the correct training around operating the new truck as well as monitoring how the vehicle is being operated overtime as a protection of the city's new asset.

Vice Mayor Ellis agreed that proper training for firefighters to operate the vehicle and perform easy maintenance on the vehicle is paramount.

Commissioner Johnson states that the firetruck will need to be purchased this year. As this is simply a discussion, it will need to be implemented in the budget for the council to vote on. Johnson goes on to ask if there will be a "cannot exceed amount" in the budget. City Manager Carey says yes and if expenses were to exceed the projected amount, city staff would then come back to council and regroup.

Discussion of the restoration of the library and possibly using the city's tourism money to restore the building. Commissioner Johnson asked if there been any traction on hiring someone to restore the building. Carey states that we will need at least 3 quotes from contractors or possibly go through the bid process and have a plan for the restoration

Mayor Swearingen stated that regarding the budget, something that would be important to include is the lighting for the tennis/pickleball court as well as additional street lighting towards the interstate.

No action was taken regarding capital projects.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

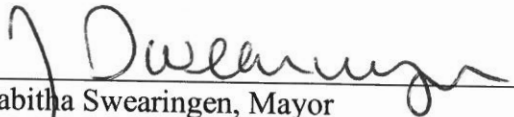
City Manager Carey gave a report. She stated that City Hall would be closed on Friday, May 15th as Erinn is getting married. She passed her second CMFO test on May 1st. Carey shared the need for Kevin Breeding to serve as the project manager for the North Moore Road Ditch project and the Haywood Fisher Road and North Moore Road Paving project. With the closing of the Orlinda branch of Volunteer Bank, plans are being made to move the contents of the safe deposit box from the Orlinda branch to the Portland branch.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Swearingen expressed concern about water on highway 49. She said staff from the state have been inspecting it. The state had worked on the road project on this location in the past and someone did not like the way it was completed and decided to take it upon themselves to pour concrete under the road, which is the source of the issue. Swearingen does believe the state has been back on location, but the question if the issue will be resolved anytime soon still stands.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:59 pm Mayor Swearingen adjourned the meeting.


Tabitha Swearingen, Mayor
City of Orlinda, Tennessee

Erinn Scates, City Recorder
City of Orlinda, Tennessee