

Mayor & Board of Aldermen – Regular Meeting

Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2025

Present: Mayor Adrain Wiggins
Vice Mayor Cates
Aldermen Austin, Bailey, Campbell and Hummel

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

1. Call to order by Mayor Wiggins

2. Establish Quorum

All present

3. Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

4. Approval of Agenda

Alderman Austin made a motion to postpone the readings of Ordinance 25-03, Ordinance 25-04 and Resolution 25-16. Alderman Campbell seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

Vice Mayor Cates made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Alderman Bailey seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

5. Reading and Correction/Approval of Minutes

April 17, 2025 – Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Vice Mayor Cates made a motion to approve April 17, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. Alderman Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

6. Special Item: Proclamation Reading

Mayor Wiggins proclaimed May 2025 as Building Safety Month

7. Citizen's Comments

A. Orfa Deck, Driftwood Loop - Senior Citizens were recently notified of a schedule change, cutting Senior Activities to once a week. Ms. Deck speaking for the Senior Citizens Group, stated there were

approximately 50 seniors who utilize the activity programs held each Tuesday and Thursday, as a means of social activity; and in some instance, it is the only time for getting out of their homes. Instead of cutting Senior Activities, it was requested that the Board consider bringing in another person, allowing the Seniors to continue meeting twice a week. She also shared there are grants available to venues named "Senior Center", entertaining the idea of changing the name from "Activity Center". A petition was provided to Mayor Wiggins prior to the meeting, requesting the return of Senior Activities to twice a week.

B. Roy Neuhauser, Countryside Dr.- Stated he attended the workshop (May 14, 2025), where Water and Sewer rate increases to residents were discussed. He inquired about the reason that tap fees are not being addressed.

8. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Wiggin's first addressed Mr. Neuhauser's comment stating it is his belief that Oakland charges the highest for tap fees of any municipality within a 50-mile radius of Blue Oval City. He further stated the town cannot assess a high enough tap fee to pay down the \$25m infrastructure loan. Increasing the tap fee will cause builders to leave and build elsewhere. He added, growth is the way to pay down on projects.

Mayor Wiggin's reported he had organized a school field trip, where homeschoolers toured both the Water Treatment and the Wastewater Treatment Plants.

9. Communication from the Aldermen

Alderman Austin asked that condolences be sent to the family of former Oakland Alderman Mark Kelley, who recently passed.

Alderman Hummel acknowledged Wastewater employees Cornelious Allen, Randall Andrews and Clayton Perry who are working, on their personal time, to get extra certification to ensure coverage in the event of staff absences throughout the department.

10. Department Head Reports

Police Chief Earl brought to the attention of the Board that this week was National Police Week, and today is National Police Day, explaining the memorial was in Washington DC; and, was established by President Kennedy in 1962, to pay honor for officers who have lost their lives.

Chief Earl reported 187 pounds of medications were collected during National Pill Take-Back Day on April 29th.

Chief Earl, referring to previous conversations of the Drug Fund, informed the Board he has reached out to the Drug Task Force to get Oakland Police Department reengaged in the program.

Alderman Austin requested Chief Earl to remain at the podium, as she was retrieving her phone. She began reading that as a recent board member and a resident for more than 30 years, she observed some things going on in departments. Efforts have been made to get departments to move forward, and there are policy and procedure changes that need to be made. She stated that as of today, there has been no

effort made to publicly announce ways the Police Department is addressing the rise in crime that has occurred over the past several years, or to address the random acts of violence that threatens our school's safety. Alderman Austin commented, in speaking with the sheriff, she was made aware of "the appearance" of a "riff" between the Oakland Police Department and the Fayette County Sheriff's Department; something she does not condone, appreciate or support. Further addressing Chief Earl, she stated, "As a Public Service Member this creates a strain among personnel, possible disloyalty to those in authority and could lead to an environment resulting in unprofessional actions that tarnish the town. No matter the uniform you wear, as an employee of this town it's your duty, your responsibility is to be respectful not only to those you work with, but to the citizens, response to scenes that require your presence whether you are on duty or not; report on time to work; protect every employee no matter where they work, which includes our own town employees, every business, the community thoroughfares, the children that attend our schools and the citizens of this town. That does not only apply to those of us who swore an oath sitting at this table, but, it is expected of everyone who represents this town as an employee. I've taken all the reports since November 2024, and I have come to the conclusion that road safety is the main function of our police department, as over 2,300 tickets/ citations or warnings have been written during the last 180 days. The monthly reports do not reflect any follow up on investigative crimes, nor provide any information related to the serious crimes that have occurred in our town, regarding shootings, vehicle thefts, vehicle vandalism, attempted ATM robberies, successful ATM robbery, or response to school threats. The Board needs to be responsible to address the policy regarding highspeed chases that have occurred on our roadways, and I have read them on Facebook. I have given this a lot of thought and for the safety of all my neighbors, our employees, our children, the commuters that travel our roads and as well as the member of this board, it's part of my obligation to provide each one of them a safe work environment, a safe living environment, a safe place to shop or eat, safe roads to travel and safe places for our children to learn and play. Therefore, I have lost all confidence in your ability to continue leading this police department of the Town of Oakland, and I hereby make a motion that your position of police chief of the Town of Oakland be terminated immediately and effective tonight."

Chief Earl stated he did not know how to address her comments, "because there are some many baseless accusations and I'm not sure where you are getting your information". Mayor Wiggins intervened, stating "Chief Earl, one second, I'll give you a chance to speak, but I do have a motion on the floor. Before we continue is there a second (to the motion)"? Alderman Campbell said he would second the motion for discussion. Mayor Wiggins then gave the floor to Chief Earl. He said each item line would have to be gone through to address them. He further stated the Police Department is transparent, putting things out on social media. But as far as violent crimes go, there are on-going investigations that can't be discussed; and, we (the OPD) are not in the school systems, the deputies' police the schools. As for traffic violations, we (Town of Oakland) are the second or third safest in the state of Tennessee, which makes the case that we're not just writing tickets". In closing he stated he would address each item if provided with the information that Alderman Austin was referring to.

Mayor Wiggins asked if there were any questions from the board. Alderman Hummel stated she had a comment. "I am not in support of this motion and am appalled by the motion to begin with. If an alderman has an issued with a department head, it should be brought to the attention of the town manager which is part of his/her job, to investigate. If further actions need to be taken, then do so. But to make this a public scene and try to discipline a valued employee of our department is absurd and it is out of line; and this motion should not be considered, it should be handled in-house with our town manager.

Then, under his direction and further investigation of the charges, should they be supported, action by the board can be taken, but no action should take place tonight.” Alderman Hummel reiterated she was totally against it and appalled.

Mayor Wiggins asked if there were any other comments from the aldermen. With no-one speaking, he asked Chief Earl if he had anything else, to which he replied, “no...that’s all I’ve got”. Mayor Wiggins moved forward in quoting the charter, asking Attorney Minor to correct him if he’s wrong. “The charter says that department director’s work at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed at will. Is that right? Is that a correct statement?” Attorney Minor retrieved his copy of the charter, stating Mayor Wiggins was correct. Mayor Wiggins asked Attorney Minor to read aloud the portion pertaining to the discussion. Attorney Minor then began reading Section 7, page C10, paragraph 5 of the Oakland Town Charter. Mayor Wiggins then asked Attorney Minor if the motion was proper according to the charter. Attorney Minor stated he was caught off guard (by the motion) and had not done any research on this, but taking the charter at its word, he would assume so.

Mayor Wiggins said if there were no further comments, he would move to the vote. Proceeding with a roll call vote, Alderman Campbell=Abstained, Alderman Austin=Yes, Alderman Hummel=No, further stating “there was an undercurrent because this Mayor came to this alderman asking if he was ready to second this motion. At the time I didn’t know what motion he was talking about, but now I know”. Mayor Wiggins stated, “that was an incorrect statement”, and moved to Alderman Bailey who voted yes, and last to Vice Mayor Cates who also abstained. Mayor Wiggins summarized the votes as 2 Abstentions, 1 No and 2 Yes causing the motion to fail. Chief Earl was then dismissed from the podium. Alderman Cates stated he would like “Harvey to investigate some of this stuff, because you have been talked to about this before I know”. Alderman Cates asked Town Manager Ellis, if he heard his request, which he replied yes.

Mayor Wiggins asked if there were any department directors who like to come forward, or if there were any aldermen that had questions of any directors. Alderman Hummel requested Parks & Rec Director Weston to step forward, related to citizens comments. Providing background, she explained she had received numerous messages from Senior Citizens relating to a change in their normal activities. It was explained to her by Town Manager Ellis that the change was instituted by him, to expand the center’s use, in making it available to other groups that may wish to utilize the facility. Alderman Hummel asked Director Weston if the normal activities could be temporarily resumed for the seniors until there is evidence of interest from other groups. Mr. Ellis stated he & the director will discuss the issue next week.

Director Weston was asked by Mayor Wiggins, in the instance of a community event at the activity center, with musicians performing, is there a charge for them to play? Director Weston answered, no. Mayor Wiggins then asked about Chair Yoga and Line Dancing. Mr. Weston said citizens are not charged to participate in Chair Yoga; and then explained, line dancing was discontinued because the cost of paying the instructor could not be justified based on the participation. Mayor Wiggins pointed out there was a Quilting group that met, who paid, but left when the rates increased; asking what made that group different? Mr. Weston explained the Quilter’s was a group not open to public participation, membership was required.

Vice Mayor Cates inquired about daytime activities since school is out of session. Mr. Weston says he is anticipating day camp activities which include arts & crafts a couple of days a week.

Director Weston circled back to the original issue of reducing the senior's activities. He informed the Board that he was short-staffed, due to an employee who is out with an injury. He stated he is relying heavily on Kerry to assist in picking up the slack in other areas during this busy season.

Alderman Campbell weighed in that he too feels the seniors should have their normally scheduled activities reinstated.

Town Manager Ellis advised the Board, this was a decision that he made.

11. Town Manager Report

Town Manager Ellis provided an update on the proposed church building, still waiting for the report of asbestos, mold and lead paint stating he had received an email anticipating the report will be made available within the next two weeks.

Mr. Ellis informed the Board of the Water Departments most recent achievement of winning for the 3rd time, "Best Tasting Water in Region 11 of West TN".

Attorney Minor was recognized to speak. He elaborated further on the timeline of the church building, only because he would be out of the office the 1st week of June. He reiterated the due extended diligence period expires (Friday) June 13, 2025. He explained the town can back out on the deal until June 13, 2025, but after that the contract goes into effect. He urged the Board to include this matter on an upcoming Special Call agenda due to timing.

12. Old Business: Ordinances Second and Final Reading w/ Public Hearing

A. Ordinance 25-02 –Internet Cyber Security & Sensitive Information- Add Section XV to Personnel Policy

Mayor Wiggins opened the floor to a Public Hearing. With no one approaching to speak the Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Cates made to hear Ordinance 25-02. Alderman Austin seconded the motion.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Cates to approve Ordinance 25-02. The motion was seconded by Alderman Austin. All were in favor, none opposed. Ordinance 25-02 passed.

13. New Business: Ordinances First Reading

A. Ordinance 25-03 – PODs (Portable Storage Containers) –Establishing Permit Requirements

This item was removed from the agenda

B. Ordinance 25-04 – Parking on Streets -Municipal Code Amendment

This item was removed from the agenda

14. Consideration of Resolutions: Old Business

A. None

15. Consideration of Resolutions: New Business

A. Resolutions 25-15 – Abatement of 215 Mallory Drive

Alderman Bailey made to hear Resolution 25-15.

A motion was made by Alderman Hummel to approve Resolution 25-15. The motion was seconded by Alderman Bailey. All were in favor, none opposed. Resolution 25-15 passed.

B. Resolution 25-16 – Adoption of Town Logo

This item was removed from the agenda

16. Other Item of Business:

A. Consideration of Lease Agreement Temporary Office Space for Building Codes and Planning Departments

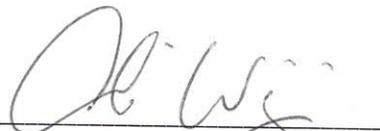
Town Manager Ellis reported to the Board the lease on the space temporarily housing Building Codes and Planning Department expires May 31, 2025. The landlord is agreeable to sign new 12-month lease with an option of a 45–60-day notice of intent to vacate, without additional expense or penalty. The rent will not increase, remaining at \$1,800. per month.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Cates to accept the lease upon legal approval. The motion was seconded by Alderman Austin. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

17. Meeting Adjourned

Alderman Bailey made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Date: May 15, 2025


Adrian Wiggins, Mayor


K. Yvonne Bullard, Town Recorder