



**Town of Mason
Mayor & Board of Alderman
TBOUR Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 5:10PM**

Call to Order: Mayor Eddie Noeman

Opening Prayer: Alderman Virginia Rivers

Roll Call: Mayor Eddie Noeman, Alderman Carolyn Catron, Alderman Virginia Rivers, Alderman Mary Mason, and Alderman Alethea Harris
(Vice Mayor Reynaldo Givhan and Alderman Trowanna Broadnax were absent)
Lureatha Harris attended the meeting after court and reviewed the video recording to generate the minutes.

Others In Attendance: Steve Osborne, Nate Foutenot, Adam Tschida, Christopher Hearn, Sara Pope, James Lewellen, and Ricky Oakley joined via phone.

Visitors: Logan Stafford, Margaret Adams, Ruby Kelly, Janet Roberts, Mandy Barfield, Laloma Harris, and Michael Harris

Mayor Noeman “Thanked” everyone for coming, the Comptroller’s Office, and recognizing Logan Stafford from the office of Representative David Kustoff.

- **COMPTROLLER PRESENTATION** – Steve Osborne
Policy and Procedures – Adam Tschida, Nate Foutenot TBOUR, and Sara Pope Finance.

- **FINANCIAL DATA PRESENTATION**
Vernetia Boyd provided financial data to the Board and Ms. Boyd is working on the January report. Alderman Harris mentioned the computer system and not being able to formulate, Vernetia said possibly the shared expense/shared cost.

Mayor Noeman recommends that the Board have a Special Call Meeting just for Finance. Alderman Harris has concerns of everyone attending the meeting. Alderman Mason questioned the names of employees in Public Works and their certifications. Alderman Mason said Mayor Noeman refused to give out the information requested. Mayor Noeman questioned Alderman Mason about a written request for the information. Mr. Osborne stated that when a request is made by a Board member, they need that information, and Board members should not need the freedom of information act. Alderman Mason said she has a copy of a receipt where Mayor Noeman paid for fifty



turkeys out of the towns' money or the Walmart money. Mayor Noeman said every year he pays from his money personally for the turkeys and it's not the towns' money. Alderman Rivers said Mayor Noeman spoke about donations from Core Civic and other places, but it never came before the Board for approval to put the money in the Budget. Mayor Noeman said there's a certain amount of money that he can spend but if it comes from his pocket then it's different, and people didn't personally donate money to him. Alderman Rivers said the Board needs to know how many donations were received, and it should be brought before the Board to put it in the Budget. Mr. Osborne said grant money is appropriated, and he wants to see the town succeed, and we can come together and manage the city. Mr. Osborne gave an example of a house being framed, and stated that the bickering has to stop, stating that if it's city dollars the Board has to vote on it.

Alderman Harris mentioned Mayor Noeman using the towns' credit card for the purchase, and Mayor Noeman said he reimbursed the purchase. Alderman Harris said you cannot charge on the town credit card, and then pay it back, mentioning that Mayor Noeman can spend up to twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2,500). Alderman Harris said the taxpayers don't want to spend their money on turkeys, with a population of about thirteen hundred people (1,300). Mayor Noeman said he did the same thing last year and have the receipts, stating that he paid from his own pocket.

Areas of concern:

Adam Tschida spoke about Budget Monitoring, Charter Amendment, and Interfunds. TCA Code best practice Internal Controls procedures TCA 918 Statue 102A is up to the Local Government and the Board to prevent and ensure the assets of the town are protected and not opened for malfeasance. Mr. Tschida made the Board aware that the Comptrollers don't make a habit of attending Board Meetings on a regular basis unless the municipality is not functioning well. The investigative report consisted of payroll, credit cards, a lack of internal controls, purchasing policies, and payroll oversight. Budget Management, Allocation of Shared Costs, Policies for the Planning Commission, and Policies and Procedures for HR are needed. The only thing that's been started on is the Purchasing Policy. Employees working different Utility Funds, General Funds to Water and Sewer Funds, the town is out of compliance with this.

Shared Costs, funds need to be reimbursed in a timely manner, immediately. This is something that must be approved. A late Audit affects Budget approval, and this is a violation of the Corrective Action Plan. The Budget cannot be approved if it does not come in. Budget Monitoring and Budget to Actual statements are required monthly.



The Board is entitled to compare amendments, reviews and reconciliations to help the government run. Budget Policy- Having a calendar for Budget readings, etc. Internal Policies- The Board has the power to pass procedures and Internal Controls, the Board needs to know the rules and enforce them. Interfunds General to Water and Sewer Funds of \$50K were cleared up. Gas to Water and Sewer comes down to Shared Cost and require reimbursing Shared Cost. Interfunds-Funds can pile up, requiring making correct journal entries. Mr. Tschida said their mission is *To Make Government Work Better* and informed the Board to stay away from transfers. Internal Policies dictate the Board to pass, the Board as a member has as much power as anyone else and look at how you want the town to succeed. Wanting to be part of the growth, costs are measured by businesses.

Charter Amendment for a Town Administrator

Mr. Tschida informed the Board that a Town Administrator designed for a city like Mason that the benefit would be getting a full-time person and being accountable to the Board. The Town Administrator monitors the policies. The inputs are the procedures and implementing them, protecting the town is what the citizens deserve. Opportunities to reformulate the opportunities of the town. Mayor Noeman said he was a part-time mayor making \$500 monthly and the city council makes \$100 monthly. Alderman Harris questioned Shared Cost asking if it was okay. Mr. Tschida said it should be reimbursed as soon as possible. Revenue needs to be reimbursed to the proper fund; it's not a good idea to mix funds. Mayor Noeman said the ladies up front in City Hall are paid from Water and Gas, and we don't have all these Due to Due From.

Alderman Harris questioned if developers, and industrial look at whether a town has a Town Administrator. Mr. Lewellen mentioned looking at professional management. Mayor Noeman spoke about the system handling the growth and stated that he was looking at annexing for one hundred acres (100) and working with some engineers to handle the growth from \$600K to \$800K. Mayor Noeman said he was not going to talk about it until he gets further information. Mr. Tschida said the Board needs to be aware of what is happening with the utilities. Alderman Rivers said there is no proper Internal Controls, and there should be more than one individual. Alderman Rivers gave an example of everyone working from one cash drawer in the front office. Alderman Rivers questioned corrections and stated that no one else is looking at the numbers and figures. Mr. Tschida mentioned financial statements, Mr. Osborne recommends breaking it up with different people, one opening payments, and another receiving the payments. Mayor Noeman said two people close the register together which was a recommendation from the state, one billing and one collecting payments.



Mr. Tschida said changing the Charter and government is not always easy. Alderman Harris said she appreciated the help because there was no bridge there, mentioning proper utility training, and how to read finance reports properly, and not knowing prior to that. Alderman Harris said Mr. Lewellen has helped tremendously. Alderman Harris said she looked at the Investigative Report and don't see any changes but it's not intentional. Alderman Catron questioned getting support fifteen years ago and getting things together back then and having more businesses and things changed. Years and years nothing was never pointed out, the town is dead and businesses are not coming into the town. Alderman Catron spoke about communication and everyone being on the same page. Being a citizen, change is good and getting back to where we need to be. Things are changing and people need to come out and hear for themselves. Mr. Tschida said he was glad to see the Board taking interest and the opportunity to solve the issues.

Mayor Noeman mentioned the town being in the red in "2023" and the Comptrollers tried to take the Charter is "2022." Mayor Noeman said he fired sixteen people including finance etc., and the town is in better shape. Mayor Noeman said some good Board members are trying to make it happen, by saving every penny nickel and dime. There are no contracts with finance, there is cash in the bank and Core Civic is bringing more jobs to the town. Alderman Rivers mentioned people doing gas and lawn service should not be paid from the same fund. All employees need to be paid from the proper account.

Corrective Action Plan

Alderman Rivers mentioned paying money back to the proper fund, and how to put an end to it. The gas bill is higher than what's in the account. Mr. Osborne said we don't need a whole month to pay back the account, and we don't have to pay everyone from one fund account meaning (water).

Sara Pope- Division of Local Government Finance

Ms. Pope informed the Board that she deals with the Audit Contract, and Banks Finley and White communicates with their office. Written communication is issued for discrepancies, and a letter of review is submitted to be distributed to the Board. Late Audits and Contracts are needed in a timely manner, to be completed by the end of the FY. Ms. Pope mentioned being here in August, the Engagement Letter was to be discussed, and the Audit Contract was approved in their office, signed and everyone being on the same page. Audit availability is of the utmost importance with a window for the Audit, by providing financial records/information, and meeting requirements. There was a late contract for "2025," which is against State Law.



December 11, 2025, information was provided and the books must be closed in sixty days of year end, this is an indicator of a late Audit. The contract should be received by June 30th, books should be closed by August 31st and the Audit Report should be received by December 31st.

Ms. Pope said an extension was requested that the Board was unaware of. Alderman Harris questioned who fixes it since the Audit information was not provided in time.

Mayor Noeman said before it was Mrs. Hughey and Ms. Evans in finance, and Vernetia stepped in and finished the CMFO classes and she's in a meeting every Tuesday to report to the state.

Mayor Noeman said if 1,2,3, is needed Vernetia presents it and provides everything. Mayor Noeman said Alderman Harris helped Vernetia to catch it up. Ms. Pope said information has been provided to the Auditors. June 30, 2026, the contract needs to be signed by Mayor Noeman and the Auditor, clear communication is required with the Auditors when they can expect information. Also, ensuring the books are closed for Mason by August 31st.

Questions for the Auditors

Alderman Harris questioned what the Auditors are looking for in the Audits and catching information in the income statements whether over budgeted, or appropriated, or see if the Auditors would come to the Board stating this is what we found. Mr. Hearn mentioned not meeting the threshold, stating that if it falls below materiality, they don't look at everything. The Auditors calculate materiality, anything above the threshold they look at it and that varies. Alderman Harris questioned how do you catch it and Ms. Pope replied by Internal Controls, and stated that the intention of the Auditors is to not look at every single transaction.

Alderman Harris used an example of someone being paid and assume it was payroll, but they were paid from accounts payable. Ms. Pope said a selection of testing would be involved, there are many procedures to be detected. Alderman Rivers questioned timeframes and it has to do with the Auditors availability. Mr. Hearn spoke about not getting information until December. Mr. Hearn said by getting information quickly now, they are looking at getting this done by the end of this month and wanting to get the management discussion deadline.

Alderman Rivers questioned the timeframe, and the response was that books and records are needed by August 30th to Mr. Hearn. Mr. Hearn informed the Board that if no information is received by a certain date, the time must be extended. Alderman Rivers said the Board was told that everything had been submitted to the Auditors and this was a lack of communication.

No approval of extension-Ms. Pope

Ms. Pope informed the Board that they request something be sent, but no authority is given to approve extensions, but to notify the office. Alderman Harris had concerns of the late Audit affecting grants being applied for. Ms. Pope said the sooner the better to get in the deadline on a routine basis. Alderman Rivers would like for the Board to be made aware of what's being



sent. Mayor Noeman said after this one has been submitted, we can get the state contract and begin on the next.

- **TBOUR PRESENTATION-** Nate Foutenot

Nate Foutenot with the Tennessee Board of Utility Operation suggests trying to facilitate for Masons' future. The town issues that are occurring and the breakdown of governance and being able to provide constructive criticism. The Comptrollers don't make a habit of attending meetings. The Utility Board was created in "2022" and went into effect in "2023", the Utility Review Board gives approval over utilities, and the Board consists of eleven members, one Speaker of the House and one Speaker of the State. The Board offers free oversight from professionals with experience.

History of Mason

Local government finance, investigation, concerns uncovered, managerial turnover causes chaos. The last two Audits were FY23 and FY24, showed a decrease of \$800K in net position. An example is because of inflation or operational costs with the water and sewer funds. The Town of Mason is unable to show anything, financial distress, 25% loss in value of the Water and Sewer System. The Natural Gas Fund decrease is statutory net position. There is financial distress from an analytical standpoint. The utility system is owned by the citizens of the Town of Mason and wanting to take advantage of the growth happening. The Town of Mason has the potential; by looking at the finance will Mason have the capability. Revenue without strategy is temporary relief. Mr. Foutenot questioned the Board about a five- or ten-year plan, short falls, and visions to see what you want Mason to look like. Infrastructure growth and how to support customers. The strategy right now is to patch, and it should be to rebuild working with accounting firms, and what the Board can do through contracts. The Budget/Audit is already late and hold accountability to the State of Tennessee. Citizens cannot say how money is used in the correct manner.

Regionalization Consolidation

The Board is elected to be public servants, what can we do to improve positions as a Board. Utility systems the longer they are the stronger they are and build relationships. The town is losing control and authority and the office of TBOUR is concerned about unfair practices. This does not take responsibility off another system, Mr. Foutenot said what he has seen is relationships built. Look at how we can better serve our neighbor or friend, and make cities towns and counties stronger. Alderman Harris mentioned \$800K being lost in a period of two years, and the solution would be to involve more of an analysis. Operating on a day-to-day basis or if there's time consolidating. Poplar Grove Utilities voted no to consolidate with the Town of Mason. Mr. Foutenot mentioned this being a long-suffering problem and suggested ideas on how to change this. The Board has a rate study and a strong connection with the community. Mr. Foutenot thinks it's an operation of government. Alderman Harris suggests working with TBOUR or find out how to correct the issue. The rate study was for the Audit concerns of the past. TBOUR has long-standing issues with the town. Mr. Oakley mentioned



the utility rates were raised 25% about a year and a half ago. Mr. Oakley spoke about a water and sewer rate evaluation, he spoke with Ross Colona and he's working closely with Vernetia. Mr. Oakley recommends a Work Session with the Board around the first of March to dig out of the problem. Mayor Noeman said in "2023" the town was run with unprofessional people and was in very bad shape. Ms. Brazil and the State of Tennessee requested professional people to run the town. Mayor Noeman said he fixed over eighty leaks and lots of water was lost, and people were not being billed correctly, receiving minimum bills.

Bring everything in-house

Mayor Noeman mentioned not contracting people and bringing everything in-house and there's been lots of progress. The rate study is showing progress with the water loss. Mr. Foutenot said things has actually gotten worse since "2023." Mr. Oakley said "2024" was worse than "2023" stating they lost the water system for about two weeks, and it showed up in "2024." We will see what the "2025" Audit looks like. Mr. Oakley doesn't think as much money will be spent in "2025." There's better revenue on water grants. Mr. Foutenot said it's important for a rate study as a temporary solution. Alderman Mason questioned what could have contributed to water loss of 500,000 gallons, stating that the water switch was left turned on.

Alderman Harris mentioned based on the population the typical number of connections are about twelve hundred (1,200), and they are currently manually read. Mr. Foutenot anticipated having three to seven utility workers, Mason is on the higher side according to expenses. Mr. Oakley suggests cutting expenses and not hurting the services.

Mayor Noeman said he appreciates Mr. Foutenot for coming. Mr. Lewellen informed the Board that loss of water contributes to loss revenue, and knowing the number of employees that are parts of water and gas and working together for true costs. Knowing what accounts funds are being paid to determine the proper part of the workday.

Board of Alderman Responsibilities

Mr. Lewellen informed the Board of Alderman that they are managers for the town, and they are responsible for what happens and put things in place.

An example was given of Murphy's Law.

Murphy's Law-develop procedures and processes, and internal controls speaking through four (4) votes. The Board looks at internal processes and fix them. By not following H/R and Finance procedures was embarrassing for Finance and H/R a few years ago. Questions were what you should have known, you're in charge, and what you should have done to find the problem.

Mr. Lewellen informed the Board of trainings that were being held in Collierville for fraud training which protects you from misappropriation of funds to prove your innocence.

There are lots of policies that need to be worked on.

Mr. Osborne mentioned being here in October, and November and spoke of a Resolution for



a Purchasing Ordinance. Mayor Noeman mentioned the attorney putting in the proper language. The current policy was adopted by Resolution, and this can sunset the policy.

- **UPDATES ON POLICIES AND ADOPTION OF ANY THAT ARE FINAL**

Alderman Harris read and made a motion for the Purchasing Agent....

RESOLUTION NO. R12152025-3 A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING A PURCHASING AGENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ADOPTED PURCHASING PROCEDURES FOR THE TOWN OF MASON, TENNESSEE, and the motion was 2nd by Alderman Mason: vote passed 5-0 (Mayor Noeman was included in the vote. This would not require going to the next meeting.

Cont'd to the Board Meeting on February 23, 2026

The Second Reading of an Ordinance establishing the maximum purchase amount and adopting a new purchasing policy by Resolution. This increases the dollar amount for bidding, the Ordinance will sunset the 2nd vote to replace the Old Purchasing Policy, and can be added to the next Board Meeting, and the 2nd reading of an Ordinance and adopt a Resolution at the Board Meeting on February 23, 2026, with an update on policies and a 2nd reading of an Ordinance to delete the existing policy in consideration of a Resolution to adopt a new Purchasing Policy. The motion was made by Alderman Harris and 2nd by Alderman Mason; vote passed 5-0 (Mayor Noeman was included in the vote)

CONSTITUENTS/CONCERNS: (2MINUTES)

Mandy Barfield is the property manager at Mason Manor Apartments and moved in October of "2023." There has been a problem since "2023" and she needs someone to talk to about the sewer pump not being big enough for the twenty-four (24) units. Tenants are needing to replace their belongings, and raw sewage is on both sides, and no one is calling or emailing back when attempting to contact someone. This has been a problem for three (3) years and it's still a problem. Mr. Oakley said he tried replacing the pump and that didn't work, and the new plan is for an emergency situation. Mayor Noeman said he pushed hard and wanted the problem solved, and two (2) contractors are trying to get a price together for two (2) phases and it may be the force main. Mr. Oakley said he could get the contractor as an emergency, and this could cost 12K or 20K to replace the pump and look at replacing the pipe. This cannot be mixed with the ARP work. Mr. Foutenot said the customers with the Town of Mason are experiencing problems with raw sewage, and the town cannot fix the problem due to monetary issues. Alderman Harris mentioned having a revolving loan, and Mid-South Septic was coming out with the sewer backing up. The plan could be bid or constructed. Mr. Oakley said the solution in reference to the raw sewage would be to replace the force main, and might buy a little time to get a grant. Replacing the force main is more of a cost-effective way. Alderman Rivers questioned how soon the town could do that to avoid problems with sewage.



Mr. Oakley sent the plans to the well-drilling contractor last week and they have a contract in place, but it needs to be kept separate from the ARP work and could state that this is an emergency. Alderman Catron questioned if there is something the state could do. Mr. Foutenot said **no**, the state does not and money is being accounted for.

CONSTITUENTS/CONCERNS/CONTINUED

Mr. Osborne spoke of an emergency purchasing procedure. Mayor Noeman mentioned a constituent suing the town for one million dollars (1,000,000). Mr. Osborne said the Board must decide, and Mayor Noeman said Carl Stevenson and Christopher Luss are working hard. Mr. Osborne suggested looking at the entire system. Mr. Oakley said, depending on getting the 400 ft. line and numbers from the contractors, he will call tomorrow 2-18-26. Mr. Osborne advised calling another contractor if needed. Alderman Mason questioned why Public Works can't do this, and Mayor Noeman said he would check with Mr. Hall, Chris and Carl. Mr. Foutenot said the Town of Mason has been in financial distress for the past two to three years, and the town cannot afford a minor repair. Alderman Harris said she spoke with Ms. Barfield, and she spoke with Carl. Alderman Rivers said the people from Public Works are not coming to the meetings, and the department heads are absent. Mr. Osborne encouraged the Board to keep going and a City Manager understand your utilities. Focus on the city and talk to other cities. Mr. Osborne said the problem is much worse, and recommended that the Board call back and let the Comptrollers know what they need to do to fix the problem, and suggests inviting the Comptrollers back and asking questions to build Mason.

CLOSING PRAYER: Alderman Virginia Rivers

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Mayor Noeman made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was 2nd by Alderman Harris: All agreed, the meeting adjourned at 7:54pm

Eddie Noeman, Mayor

Date

Lureatha Harris, Town Recorder