

September 9, 2026

WINCHESTER SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Winchester City Council held special meeting September 9, 2026 at City Hall.

Mayor McIntire called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. with the following council in attendance: Jeff Pittman, Bill Jacquot, Terry Gregory, Melinda Hembrough, Jack Daniels, Gerald Evans and City Clerk Teri Little.

Also, in attendance were Wanda Cody, City Treasurer; John Paul Coonrod, City Attorney; Carmen Ensinger, River County News; Greg Hillis, Benton Engineering; Jill Cox, Sara Kilver; James Dobson, Jennifer Neff and Alexandria Dolen.

This meeting is being held to discuss current issues with the swimming pool.

Greg Hillis, Benton Engineering, advised some background to the issue. The main drain was installed 2011. Since then, in other places there have been 3-4 fatalities that were linked to this style of drains. This did not occur here.

In 2017 additional testing on the main drains and then more additional testing.

In 02/2020 new codes for the main drains 1 ½ diameter under the drain.

The main drain in the city pool was patched to get thru the summer and was going to be replaced prior to the 2027 year and done as maintenance.

Due to the new EPA guidelines, it has to be replaced according to the new rules and can only be done by a pre-qualified engineer and contractor thru the EPA.

This is not just affecting us but all small towns needing to do maintenance on their pools

The cost can be \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 for the replacement of the drain. Can be a 21-week turnaround.

It was discussed that the pool and the library do lose money each year but the community needs these things to help draw people to town. We have several out-of-town groups that utilize the pool each summer and many that schedule pool parties. Out of town people may utilize other businesses in town that in turn help revenue.

Winchester still has some of the lowest rates in the area for water and gas. The council has always tried to utilize every source prior to raising fees; however, everything has gone up. This is not

just the pool but gas and water meters, chemicals and equipment and everything else that helps provide the city residents with what they need.

Several ideas were discussed on how to raise funds in the best way not just for the pool but for all expenses that incur. Currently the city charges a \$5.00 infrastructure fee. This is put in an account that is used for unexpected expenditures such as and not limited to water main breaks, gas leaks and other issues that may arise such as the pool.

Another route could be unused Rebuild Illinois Grant. The pool repairs should qualify. Attorney John Paul Coonrod will look into this.

Residents present for the meeting all stated that they would gladly agree to the additional \$5.00 fee if it meant helping keep the pool open. This does not only provide a place for area children to go in the summer but also provides vital, lifesaving swim lessons and jobs for our area teens.

Greg Hillis requested a motion for the council to approve Benton Engineering to apply for permit for the drain work.

Will discuss further at the monthly meeting in October on how to provide funds for repair.

MOTION: Melinda Hembrough moved and Jack Daniels second to approve Benton Engineering to apply for the permit for pool drain \$5000.00. Roll call resulted in all yeas. Motion carried.

MOTION: Jack Daniels moved and Jeff Pittman second to adjourn at 7:00 pm. Roll call resulted in all yeas. Motion carried.



Rex McIntire, Mayor



Teri Little, City Clerk