

City of Crossville

392 North Main Street
Crossville, Tennessee 38555



Minutes

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

8:00 AM

Spring Retreat

Conference Room 317

Work Session

Mayor R.J. Crawford
Council Member Art Gernt
Council Member Mike Turner
Council Member Mark A. Fox
Council Member James Mayberry
City Manager Valerie Hale
City Clerk Baylee Rhea

Call to Order

The Crossville City Council met for its Quarterly Retreat on Tuesday, May 20th at Crossville City Hall. Mayor Crawford was present and presiding. He called the meeting to order at 8 a.m.

Roll Call

Present 5 - Mayor R.J. Crawford, Council Member Art Gernt, Council Member Mike Turner, Council Member James Mayberry, and Council Member Mark A. Fox

Others present included City Manager Valerie Hale, Bailey Walker, Jessie Brooks, Leah Crockett, Tim Begley, Mason Fox, Ethan Hadley, Larry Kidwell, Serena Vasudeva, Chris South, Chris Kendrick, Kyle Deering, Will Taylor, Chris Peterson, Ethan Medley, Jeff Johnson, Billy Poore, and Lee Lawson.

Public Comment

There were no comments made.

1. Discussion regarding Water Metering Solutions

Kyle Deering and Will Taylor from United Systems, in partnership with Itron, presented comprehensive water metering solutions, highlighting an upgrade for the City's existing 17-year-old drive-by system to a cellular AMI solution. This advanced system will integrate with Temetra, a new web-based software slated to replace the current FCS system by 2028, a necessary component for cellular AMI endpoints. The benefits of cellular AMI are substantial, offering real-time data, customer portals, leak detection, and remote shutoff capabilities, which collectively enhance customer service and operational efficiency. The proposed system also boasts flexibility with phased deployment, compatibility with multiple meter brands, and future-proofing through 5G-ready endpoints. Case studies from utilities like Murfreesboro and Lafayette demonstrate the tangible benefits of such upgrades, showing significant reductions in unaccounted-for water and increased revenue due to more accurate meters. The financial breakdown includes a \$38,025 software upgrade, a cellular service cost of \$0.46 per meter per month (locked in with a full order), and a phased meter/endpoint replacement over four years, with \$350,000 budgeted for the first year.

This agenda item was discussed.

2. Discussion regarding Sports Council (CCCSEC)

Chris Peterson, Mason Fox, and Ethan Medley led a discussion on the Sports Council's effectiveness, particularly addressing challenges with volunteer engagement and event recruitment. Mason fox stated that the Sports Council primarily focuses on supporting existing events like the Character Banquet and various tournaments. As well as, providing hotel rooms for umpires and directors, often leaving most of its

\$20,000 annual budget unspent. Prior to the meeting, Chris Peterson discussed with City Manager Valerie Hale what the best way forward for the council should be or if the council should be dissolved. After their discussion it was proposed the restructuring of the Sports Council into a Parks and Recreation Committee with defined representation from various sectors such as hotels, trails, and youth sports, holding quarterly meetings. Mayor RJ Crawford proposed the need for better alignment with the Chamber of Commerce and tourism efforts, advocating for a more active and diverse membership to improve event coordination and maximize economic impact. The Sports Council will continue forward with restructuring, to better benefit the community and to keep aligned with the Sports Council's mission statement.

This agenda item was discussed.

3. Discussion regarding EMS/Ambulance Service

City Manager Valerie Hale opened the discussion for the EMS/Ambulance Service agenda item. Prior to the meeting, information regarding this topic was distributed to each Council member. The information was primarily focused on estimates for the FY 25/26 Budget. Capital expenditures were estimated to be \$1,600,000.00, which could be financed or possibly leased. Operating expenses were estimated to be \$1,500,000.00. These estimates are based on a 6-month period because the ambulances would not be operable or certified until January 1st, 2026. In the FY 26/27, the operating expenses are expected to be double the previous fiscal year. The City worked with Council member Fox to estimate the number of calls that a City EMS could expect, and what the reimbursements could look like. The number of calls received was estimated to be around 5,000 at \$650.00 each. The County collected \$4,400,000.00 in their last audit, where the City of Crossville made up 60% of those calls (\$2,700,000.00).

Council member Fox explained that the billable amount is not always the amount paid, and that the projected billing of \$650.00 is less than surrounding Counties with more population. Council member Turner asked Council member Fox if Crossville's EMS would by default take all out-of-town transfers like the County. Council member Fox answered that it would have to be negotiated to do so, and that it would not be implied. Out-of-town transfers could be negotiated out to a private service, if desired. Council member Turner expressed concern that if the City does out-of-town transfers, it would put less ambulances in the City and present issues. Fire Chief Chris South stated that out-of-town transfers would have to meet the criteria to be classified as an emergency, and that most of the transfers are scheduled in advanced. Since most are scheduled in advance, it should not tie down ambulances for a long period. Council member Gernt stated that there is a private service in the area that is contracted with the VA to provide transports for veterans.

Council member Mayberry asked what the staffing would look like, and where will these ambulances be stored? South responded that there will be 18 members on staff; 9 advanced emergency medical technicians and 9 paramedics with 3 ambulances and 1 ambulance on reserve. These ambulances will be stored at Fire Stations 1 and 2.

Mayor Crawford asked if 4 ambulances will be enough to meet the needs of the City. Mayor Crawford stated that the County has 13 or 14 ambulances and operate 9 of those ambulances. Mayor Crawford expressed concern that if the City has 4 ambulances, but 1 is doing transfers and another is broken down, what will happen? South responded that he does not believe the City will need more than 4 ambulances

to start out with. South explained that the County has more ambulances as they have them constantly driving to Nashville, Knoxville, and other places that significantly decline the useful life of the ambulances' service, and that the City ambulances will not be doing these types of drives on a daily basis like the County. South explained that EMS's job is to take the patient to the closest appropriate medical care facility, and most of the City's patients will be taken to Cumberland Medical Center. Once the patient is released to Cumberland Medical Center, it is up to the facility to decide on the transfers. Mayor Crawford asked how the City would not be the main transfers for Cumberland Medical Center since they are located in the City limits, and the only reason the County's EMS provides this service is because they are the only service present currently? Mayor Crawford stated from his understanding the County will withdraw their EMS from the City, if the City starts their own EMS service.

Mayor Crawford expressed his concern that the estimates for the collections of this services is being overestimated. Mayor Crawford's concerns are that Health Care providers do not always pay out what they are supposed to. Mayor Crawford explained another concern that not only are the estimates for collections being overestimated, but that the costs are being underestimated. Mayor Crawford explained that a portion of what County and City residents pay for their property tax contributes to the budget for County EMS. Mayor Crawford fears that double taxation may occur from the overlapping service if implemented, and that property tax rates will increase.

Mayor Crawford stated that he does not see a reason this service is needed, and has not received feedback from City residents wanting the service. Mayor Crawford explained that this topic has been discussed for three months, and no one has reached out to say they would like the City to offer this service. Mayor Crawford reiterated that he does not see a reason to offer this service and burden the taxpayers.

Mayor Crawford went on to say that he has talked to County Mayor Allen Foster, and that the County will take their ambulances out of the City, if the City starts an EMS service. Mayor Crawford explains that he believes there will be less ambulances on the road and not more. Council member Fox disagreed that there will be less. Council member Fox asked why would the County not ask the City for the supplement to pay them if Senate Bill 160 goes through. Mayor Crawford explained that the Bill is actually to encourage and to move forward with doing an investigation through TACIR. Mayor Crawford stated that he talked to Senator Paul Bailey, Speaker Cameron Sexton, and Representative Brock Martin and discussed that the Senate Bill 160 is to try an increase TennCare reimbursements, and that the section where the City would have to pay the County would be dead on arrival. Council member Fox asked if that was the case, then why did zero people vote against it as it was progressing?

Council member Fox asked Mayor Crawford if he said that County Foster has assured the City that the Senate Bill 160 will not go through. Mayor Crawford explained that what Mayor Foster said was if the City starts thier own EMS, the County will take their ambulances out of the City. Council member Gernt stated that he does not like the sound of the Bill, as well, and was concerned that it has progressed without a vote against it. Mayor Crawford suggested that the other Council members call Senator Paul Bailey.

Council member Turner asked if there is going to be a tax increase this year. Mayor Crawford stated that is the important question, and whomever decides this service is needed, needs to be able to answer that question.

Council member Fox asked Mayor Crawford if the City can provide this service for X

amount of dollars for what the revenue brings in, what would that be? Mayor Crawford responded that since he does not believe the service is needed, it would have to be budget neutral.

This agenda item was discussed.

Police Chief Brooks requested to present a brief a statistical update to the Council. Chief Brooks reported a significant decline in reported crimes in 2024, with 976 crimes (lowest since records began), and a 66.6% case clearance rate. He highlighted improved cooperation with local businesses on prosecuting repeat offenders and ongoing collaboration with Cumberland County Sheriff's Department. He discussed the Department's efforts to address homelessness with a dedicated social worker and partnerships with local organizations.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.