

Friendsville Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
July 3, 2025  
Friendsville City Hall  
**Minutes**

Present:

Mayor Steven Cardwell	Zach Sproul
Vice Mayor Sandra Bell	Kresha Fields
Commissioner Jonathan Newberry	Earl Fields
Commissioner Margaret Maze	Janice Lambach
Commissioner Shane Rogers	Tim Lambach
City Recorder Janet Ledbetter	Pattie Kuhn
City Administrator Kim Rogers	Debbie Bentz
City Engineer Bob Colvin	Janet Walton
City Attorney Rob Goddard	Shanon Adame
Building Official Barry Ottinger	Shelley Rios
Hailey Russell	Sergio Rios
Steve Palmer	Woody Bell
Jessica Sproul	

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.
2. Mayor Cardwell led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Janet Walton led the prayer.
4. Roll Call- Cardwell, present; Bell, present; Newberry, present; Maze, present; Rogers, present.
5. Motion to approve minutes from June 5 public hearing by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Newberry. Motion passed.
6. Motion to approve minutes from June 5 regular meeting by Commissioner Newberry, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.

Mayor Cardwell announced that the city had received a formal notice from Acadia/Village Behavioral Health stating that they were no longer pursuing the development of a facility in Friendsville, due to inadequate infrastructure. He added that most of the behavior he witnessed at the recent meeting with Acadia was personally unacceptable. He said that he would not tolerate that type of behavior in a city meeting, and that everyone would be respectful or they would be asked to leave. He said he understood that as a citizen, the project caused unnecessary concern, but as the mayor, he would always have the City of Friendsville's best interests in mind. Everyone in attendance got a copy of the press release. Vice Mayor Bell asked that it be added to the minutes.

## 7. Discussion:

Ordinance No. 2025-03: Amend Article X, Board of Zoning Appeals Section 1001, Creation and Appointment: Motion to approve on first reading by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Newberry. Motion passed.

Ordinance No. 2025-04: Amend Zoning Ordinance, Article IX Administration and Enforcement, Appeals Section Expiration/Extension of Building Permit Approvals Number 1: Motion to approve on first reading by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Newberry. Motion passed.

Ordinance No. 2025-05: Zoning Section 310, number 9, Expiration of Approved Site Plans: Motion to approve on first reading by Commissioner Newberry, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.

Resolution No. 2025-03: Adopting a social media Policy: Motion to approve by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion Passed.

Resolution No. 2025-04: Adopting Board Meeting Rules of Order: Motion to approve by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Newberry. Motion passed.

Speeding down South Farnum St. (Increase more signs or speed bump): Kim Rogers had received a request from Tom Bentley, who lives on S. Farnum, for the city to help slow down the speeders who drive down that road. She said that in the past, the city was told that if they added speed bumps that they would be liable if someone damaged their vehicle while driving across one. Vice Mayor Bell asked if that was true and mentioned that lots of other places had them. Rob Goddard said he thought they wouldn't be liable if they had

signs warning about them. Earl Fields, 414 S. Farnum, told the board that he was opposed to speeding, but that he was also opposed to speed bumps, and he hated them. Mr. Fields said he would rather have more patrolling by the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Newberry told them that he used to have a neighbor with dementia who used to check her mail several times a day and he was always worried about someone hitting her. He said he almost got hit every time he mowed his ditch, and he would be willing to try anything to slow it down. Mayor Cardwell asked Kim Rogers to put in a formal request to the Sheriff's Office for extra patrolling. He said that the city could do further studies to see what steps can be taken to help with the issue. Sergio Rios, 706 Kiser Station Rd., said that every afternoon around 4:30-5:00 there is someone who comes down S. Farnum and Kiser Station past his house and doesn't even stop for the stop sign.

Public Comments: Shelley Rios, 706 Kiser Station Rd., spoke about the public comment policy for city meetings. She said that on the city's policy, it was added that a citizen could either sign up in person or by email to speak at the public meetings. She said she looked at other municipalities' and counties' policies and said that it would be nice if the board would allow people to speak and let them know that they can ask to speak, so that everyone is treated fairly. She said that Blount County allows people to talk to the administrator or whoever is in charge of the meeting if they didn't get a chance to sign up beforehand. Mayor Cardwell said he would look into that. Commissioner Maze asked if someone wanted to contribute something during a discussion, when would they get that chance, and Kim Rogers told her that it would be during the public comment period, and that Shelley Rios had requested to be added to the agenda this month. Kim said that per MTAS, when a citizen comments, they are voicing their opinion and there is no discussion to be had. Commissioner Newberry stated that he understood when there are meetings where there is standing room only, that gives them a tool to get the meeting in order. Kim Rogers said that it gives everyone a time to speak. Commissioner Maze said she wanted everyone to have a chance to speak, but she felt that they shouldn't have to fill out a form if they had a question, only if they wanted to be put on the agenda. Kim told her that however the board chooses to handle it is fine, but that they needed something in place to move forward. Sergio Rios said he wanted to apologize and thank the board for dealing with everyone's emotions regarding Acadia. He said their fight wasn't the mayor or the board, that it was with Acadia.

8. Tabled discussion: none

9. Public comment of Agenda items: Shelley Rios mentioned the ordinances on the agenda. She said that by state statute and the city's zoning ordinance, the ordinances regarding the planning and zoning had to go back to zoning for approval before they could become effective. Mayor Cardwell said they would make sure they were following their own policy. Janet Walton, 564 Bales Hollow Rd., stated that the State of California proclaimed the month of July as Prayer and Fasting, and that Blount County was having a prayer meeting on July 19 at the courthouse and everyone was welcome. Patricia Kuhn asked about the grinder pumps, and Mayor Cardwell asked her to wait until the Utility Board meeting to discuss the issue.

10. Staff Reports:

Codes: Barry Ottinger had nothing to report. The board looked over the list of open permits.

Planning: There was no meeting in June due to lack of business and members being out of town.

Streets: None

Grants: The city got the go-ahead for the LPRF grant and is one step closer to moving forward with the project. They also got approval to issue the notice of award for the sidewalk project.

Financial updates: Janet Ledbetter gave the board a new report that shows both revenues and expenditures.

Administrator Updates: Kim Rogers announced that they won the bid on a tractor on GovDeals for \$41,000, which was purchased from McMinn County. Some of the funds for the purchase were from the city's sales of equipment on GovDeals. The city can purchase from GovDeals instead of advertising for bids since they are buying from a public entity. Mayor Cardwell said that they were able to inspect and drive the tractor before they put in a bid, and that McMinn County delivered it to Friendsville. They also had full maintenance records on the tractor. Kim said that Louisville had sent one of their employees to long arm for the city and that most of the roads had been mowed at that time.

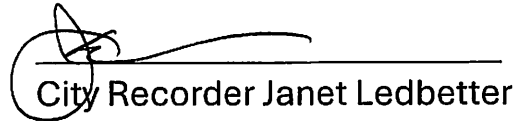
Events: None

Parks & Recreation: None

11. Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Cardwell", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Steven Cardwell

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Ledbetter", written over a horizontal line. The signature is partially enclosed by a circular mark.

City Recorder Janet Ledbetter



# City of Friendsville

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 3, 2025**

## **Village Behavioral Health Withdraws Land Development in Friendsville**

**Friendsville, TN** – The City of Friendsville has been formally notified by Village Behavioral Health, a division of Acadia Healthcare, that the organization has withdrawn its land development plan and will no longer pursue the proposed behavioral health facility within city limits.

Over the past two years, Village Behavioral Health had been exploring the possibility of relocating its adolescent treatment center—currently based in Louisville—to a site in Friendsville. The proposed facility aimed to serve male and female youth experiencing severe mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD in a secure, therapeutic environment.

As part of its due diligence, the organization conducted detailed site and infrastructure evaluations. In their official letter, Village Behavioral Health stated that the property lacked sufficient access to domestic water and fire suppression resources, presenting significant safety concerns. Additionally, the staffing and resources required to provide emergency services raised concerns about response times. Due to these limitations, the organization has officially withdrawn its application. It will seek an alternative location elsewhere in the region, according to Adam Gravley, Assistant Director of Design and Construction.

The City also acknowledges the broader concerns raised by residents about growth and development. Zoning revisions were initially discussed during a Planning Commission workshop in November 2023, and the City Commission adopted a revised zoning ordinance following its second reading in March 2024. These updates reflect the City's continued commitment to managing responsible development along the Highway 321 corridor.

**City of Friendsville**

**Mayor, Steven Cardwell**