

June 1, 2026  
5:00 p.m.  
Public Hearing  
Ripley City Courtroom

Mayor Fitzhugh called the meeting to order and requested Recorder Buckner to issue roll call.

Board members present: Alston, Chipman, Frazier, Keeley, Long, Thompson and Fitzhugh

Board members absent: none

Also present: Donna Buckner, Attorney Rachel Jackson, Chief Tracey Worlds, Superintendent Johnie Ford, Parks Director Lee Johnston, Superintendent Scott Nelson and Sergeant Herbert Gwynn

Vistors: Ron Goforth, Robert Morgan-Wilde, Shirlylynne Tuggle, Larry & Teresa Trosper, Jason Crestman, M. Miller, Linda Love and Marlon Holloway

- An ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee adopting the annual budget and tax rate for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027

Discussion: Alderman Frazier requested to change the residential fee for the additional trash can from \$30.00 to \$15.00.

- An ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee amending Title 3, Municipal Court

Discussion: No objections posed

Meeting adjourned 5:30 p.m.

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Donna Buckner, Recorder

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Craig Fitzhugh, Mayor

June 1, 2026

5:30 p.m.

Ripley Board of Mayor and Aldermen

Ripley City Courtroom

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Board members present: Alston, Chipman, Frazier, Keeley, Long, Thompson and Fitzhugh

Board members absent: none

Also present: Donna Buckner, Attorney Rachel Jackson, Chief Tracey Worlds, Superintendent Johnie Ford, Parks Director Lee Johnston, Superintendent Scott Nelson, Superintendent Mike Allmand and Sergeant Herbert Gwynn

Visitors: Ron Goforth, Robert Morgan-Wilde, Shirlynn Tuggle, Larry & Teresa Trospen, Jason Crestman, M. Miller, Linda Love, Marlon Holloway, Maurice Gaines, Doris Wilson, J.C. Bonds, James Jones, Lakenia Jones, Dedrick Pugh, Kimberly Rogers, Adrian Driver, Kayla J. Keeley, Dwight Beard, Marcus Keeley and Jay Heath

Invocation: Scott Nelson

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Thompson to approve May 4, 2026 minutes as printed and delivered in agenda package. All aye.
2. Motion by Alderman Frazier and second by Alderman Long to approve May 2026 financial statement as printed and delivered in agenda package. All aye.

Correspondence: Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury letter

3. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Chipman to recognize Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury letter. All aye.

Mayor's comments: 1) Complimented law enforcement, 2) Lauderdale County Unity Festival

4. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Keeley to approve department reports as presented. All aye.

Public comments: 1) Robert C. Morgan-Wilde regarding traffic citywide, 2) Linda Love regarding hiring of Jenkins, Dedmon law firm from Dyersburg as our city attorney.

Mike Allmand –

Ripley Power and Light Tupperware substation upgrade, substation construction bid tabulation

May 21, 2026. Upgrade required to meet the projected demand of 20 megawatts.

Discussion ensued between Mayor, Allmand, and Attorney Jackson regarding requirement for contract approvals, in light of substation upgrade cost to Ripley Power & Light of \$289,647.00, procurement/contract limits, and history of presentation of these issues to the power board.

Mayor Fitzhugh stated he reviewed what appears to be a standard contract, and that it's appropriate that the Board formally approve.

Lauderdale County Mayor Maurice Gaines expressed support for the Aluko project (company operating in Halls) and their operational status. He expressed that from the county, State, and ECD standpoint, a commitment has been made for providing power. He would request that consideration not be delayed. Mayor Fitzhugh agreed.

Aldermen Thompson expressed support for this project, in terms of receipt of revenue. Attorney Jackson clarified that this revenue does not go into general fund. It doesn't act to remediate Alderman Frazier's earlier concerns about City revenue generally, relative to the City's budget.

Mayor Fitzhugh stated that revenue and payment in lieu of taxes would give some more revenue, but that the instant issue was one of appropriate contract approval.

5. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Keeley to approve the contract. All aye.
6. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Thompson to approve Ripley Power and Light Tupperware substation upgrade, substation construction bid in the amount of \$289,647 with a start date of November 23, 2026 with a completion date of January 14, 2027. All aye.

Ripley Power and Light FY 2026-2027 budget discussion: Recorder Buckner stated there was an update to RPL capital expenditures at everyone's station which was received today.

Mayor Fitzhugh encouraged Aldermen to ask particular questions about the proposed RPL budget. Mayor Fitzhugh inquired about the '27 budget, line item 5, the 50 kilowatt is \$27,497,448 and the type of coverage. Allmand responded that most of that comes from Project BION. Mayor Fitzhugh inquired into energy needs. Allmand stated that the projected revenue to RPL would be approximately \$37M over 10 years, about \$3.7 million a year. Mayor Fitzhugh inquired into the accuracy of the projected \$3.74M projected revenue in light of the \$1M million shortfall last year, and whether there is a contract signed. Allmand stated there is. Mayor Fitzhugh then inquired into whether the expenditures was included in your long-term RPL projections. Allmand stated no, as expenditures are projected at less than \$15,000, with industry funding same. Allmand further affirmed that TVA approval for current stages with CleanSpark is obtained and that TVA studies are required for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phases. Mayor Fitzhugh inquired into projected energy use. Allmand stated it's supposed to be 39 megawatts, taking budget revenue from approximately \$19 million to about \$41 million. Mayor Fitzhugh asked whether RPL has the capacity to supply both the Ripley (CleanSpark) and Halls (Aluko) projects. Allmand stated yes, and that no other concerns exist, with the exception of TVA approval for Halls, as approval has been obtained for Ripley. Allmand affirmed his belief that with TVA approval, and upgrades to the substation, RPL can supply both. Future increases may require increases to substation size, depending on location.

Allmand also affirmed that as with CleanSpark, any future industry would pay for any expansions necessary. Alderman Frazier inquired into whether this addressed the existing one substation in that area, and Allmand confirmed.

Lauderdale County Mayor Maurice Gaines also asked for confirmation that there was sufficient power supply for both CleanSpark and Aluko...is that correct? Allmand confirmed there is.

Mayor Fitzhugh made inquiry into RPL budget line #40 and what the \$316,000 covered. Allmand stated not all items in that line are actual legal services. Attorney Jackson made inquiry into specifics, and Allmand agreed to supply a breakdown. Mayor Fitzhugh asked for a comparison to the 25-26 line item amount, and Allmand confirmed that it was the same, and not something RPL plans to spend. Mayor Fitzhugh also inquired into whether RPL currently pays for any outside legal expense, and Allmand advised that a couple hundred dollars is paid annually as a retainer for labor relations attorney. Mayor Fitzhugh suggested then, that any amounts for actual legal fees be removed.

A discussion of Aluko estimated revenue ensued. Allmand confirmed that projected Aluko revenue is included in the \$20 million additional revenue budgeted, with CleanSpark at possibly \$1M a year, variable because of the start-up testing rate. They have up to two years to get up to the 20 megawatts which is where they are going to be. Mayor Fitzhugh stated we have got to finalize those numbers before we do this. Attorney Mamantov is working on that.

Alderman Frazier asked if RPL conducted rate study on both companies operating simultaneously and the impact on residential rates. Allmand discussed peak loads and transition months, with TVA establishing rates. He indicated that he would recommend against TVA recommended increases, allowing RPL to absorb.

Attorney Jackson stated she wanted to encourage all the board members to do their due diligence and read about the areas where these data processing/data mining centers have gone in and the impact it has had on residential power rates and the impact it has on the water supply. Mike Allmand stated the first part of this company, and he assumes the rest of it, doesn't use much water; it's mineral. He can't grasp how this project can generate over \$37 million over 10 years and not be a good thing for ratepayers and the citizens of Ripley. He can't see how that's detrimental to our community. Attorney Jackson stated that she didn't think she projected whether the industry was beneficial or detrimental; she just encourages the board to do their due diligence and researching these companies online. Mayor Fitzhugh stated that he hopes it turns out to be a success. But further agreement would be required to bind the industry. There will be some jobs created, but most of the benefit will be power sales. Outside counsel is addressing terms to address noise and other details. Some division exists as to whether there is enough power to run both, with the superintendent assuring the City that there is. This is a positive for Lauderdale County and for the City, at least in the initial stage. The Board intends to protect the citizens on the second part.

7. Motion by Alderman Frazier and second by Alderman Thompson to approve Ripley Power and Light FY 26-27 budget with the removal of the legal expenses portion from RPL budget. All aye.

8. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Keeley to approve Ripley Power and Light 2026-2027 employee wage increase of 3% average with some adjustments for a few employees that need adjustments. All aye.
9. Motion by Alderman Frazier and second by Alderman Thompson to approve RPL March 2026 financials, with the latest updated financials to be provided later this week by Mr. Allmand. All aye.
10. Motion by Alderman Frazier to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> reading ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee adopting the annual budget and \$1.8724 certified tax rate and change residential fee for additional trash can to \$15.00. Motion withdrawn by Alderman Frazier.
11. Motion by Alderman Thompson and second by Alderman Long to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> reading ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee adopting the annual budget and \$2.20 tax rate and change residential fee for additional trash can to \$15.00 for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027. Roll call. Alston, Chipman, Keeley, Long, Thompson, Fitzhugh – aye. Frazier – nay. Motion passed.
12. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Chipman to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> reading ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee amending Title 3, Municipal Court. Roll call. All aye.
13. Motion by Alderman Frazier and second by Alderman Keeley to approve resolution of the City of Ripley adopting provisions pursuant to Chapter 620, Public Acts of 2026, State of Tennessee General Assembly regarding public comments. All aye.
14. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Long to approve FY 2026 Rescue Squad grant contract between the State of Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and the City of Ripley in the amount of \$35,615.00. Roll call. All aye.
15. Motion by Alderman Thompson and second by Alderman Alston to approve agreement between the City of Ripley, Tennessee and MSB Contractors, LLC for Ripley Connect Community UTM-Build-Out construction-nursing project in the amount of \$1,742,000 as recommended by TLM Associates. Roll call. All aye.
16. Motion by Alderman Frazier and second by Alderman Keeley to accept Ripley Gas, Water and Wastewater FY 2026-2027 budget as presented. All aye.
17. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Alston to approve bid tabulation for FY 2026-2027 for sand, rock, gravel, hourly equipment to SDT Contractors, Inc. and city street resurfacing hot mix paving to Ford Construction. Roll call. Alston, Chipman, Frazier, Long, Thompson and Fitzhugh – aye. Keeley – nay. Motion passed.

Alderman Alston requested special called meeting prior to July 1 to reinstate Ripley Power and Light Board. Applications have been taken to fill vacant positions of that board. Attorney Jackson stated the board can't lawfully do that; the board never voted to reinstall an independent power

board. Alderman Alston stated that Mayor Fitzhugh said that July 1, 2026 there would be a power board, but Attorney Jackson maintained that the Board never voted to reestablish an independent power board, and there could be no legal installation of board members at this juncture. No action resulted.

Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m.

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Donna Buckner, Recorder

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Craig Fitzhugh, Mayor