

JOHNSON COUNTY
JOINT ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
1923 S Shady Street
Mountain City, Tennessee 37683
423.727.9696



PUBLIC NOTICE

JOHNSON COUNTY
JOINT ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
WILL MEET

MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026

AT 12:00 P.M.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE
MAYOR'S OFFICE
AT THE
CPL WILLIAM C. MOSIER MEMORIAL BUILDING
1923 S SHADY STREET
MOUNTAIN CITY, TENNESSEE

JOHNSON COUNTY
JOINT ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
1923 S Shady Street
Mountain City, TN 37683



AGENDA

Monday, July 13, 2026

12:00pm

TO: Johnson County Joint Economic & Community Development: Jeff Fritts, Dick Grayson, Mayor Larry Potter, Angie Stout, Kody Norris, Honorable Mayor Jerry Jordan.

FROM: Mayor Larry Potter

LOCATION: County Mayor Office | CPL William C. Mosier Memorial Building

AGENDA:

1. Public Comments
2. Roll Call
3. Minutes-Approve from April 27, 2026
4. Update on CPL William C. Mosier Memorial Building and Meet Processing Facility. - Mayor Potter
5. Update on :EAA” European American Armory -Mayor Potter
6. Phoenix Medical update - Mayor Potter
7. Transfer Station -Equipment Grant update and Recycling Grant update- Mayor Potter
8. Tourism Update-Minutes from Round table discussion
9. **Tour of the CPL William C. Mosier Memorial Building** – Following adjournment of the meeting, guests are invited to participate in an optional tour of the CPL William C. Mosier Memorial Building. The tour will take place after the meeting in consideration of guests' schedules and time constraints.
10. Any other matters which may duly come before the committee for official action.

MINUTES OF THE JOHNSON COUNTY JOINT ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEETING

DATE: Monday, April 27, 2026

TIME: 12:00 PM

LOCATION: County Mayor Office | Johnson County Courthouse

PRESIDING: Mayor Larry Potter

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Larry Potter called the meeting to order. A roll call was conducted to establish a quorum.

- **Committee Members Present:** Dick Grayson, Gina Meade, Kody Norris, Angie Stout, Mayor Jerry Jordan and Mayor Larry Potter
- **Guest Attendance:** Chad Greever, Courtney Pleasant, Angel Snyder, Jerry Gentry, Police Chief Joey Norris, Jamie Meade, Amanda Hall, Daniel Rengerin, Realty), and Sheila Caldwell (Tourism).
- **Media Attendance:** The Tomahawk, Macy Muller (News 11), and Natalea Hillen (WCYB News 5).

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the **February 09, 2026** meeting were presented for review.

- **Action:** Minutes approved as written.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS: FIREARMS MANUFACTURING PROJECT

Special Guests: Keith Bernkrant (EAA/Handgun Producer), Jeremy Hammons, and Drew Markel (One Horse).

- **Project Overview:** A proposal to establish a 100% "Made in the USA" firearms production facility in Johnson County. This project fills an industry void left by Anderson Corp.
- **Operational Details:** Relocating equipment from 5 states to a centralized ITAR Certified Precision Machine Shop in Mountain City. The operation will run 24/7.
- **Economic Impact:** \$25M investment over 10 years; 80–110 jobs; wage range of \$20–\$40/hr.
- **Facility:** Primary focus is 4667 Hwy 91. Plans include building rehab and potential future expansion.

Re: Up Date EAA Corp

From mayor <mayor@johnsoncountyttn.gov>
Date Fri 6/19/2026 10:14 AM
To keithb@eaacorp.com <keithb@eaacorp.com>

Keith thank you for the update, this is very exciting for our community. I really appreciate your investment and all the hard work you are doing in helping our community in economic development. This project will be amazing for our entire region. Thank You, Mayor Potter.

Larry Potter, Mayor
Johnson County Government
222 West Main Street
Mountain City, TN 37683
423-727-9696



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From: keithb@eaacorp.com <keithb@eaacorp.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2026 5:02 PM
To: office mayor <office.mayor@johnsoncountyttn.gov>
Cc: jeremy@theonehorse.com <jeremy@theonehorse.com>; mayor <mayor@johnsoncountyttn.gov>
Subject: Up Date EAA Corp

Larry

As of this email, below is the current status of our project.

Building Update

1. The 4667 building has been purchased and is 100% paid for.
2. The drainage issues have mostly been resolved. We will need another significant rain to fully confirm the repairs.

Johnson County Joint Economic & Community Development Committee

ThreeStar Roundtable Report Review Minutes

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting Purpose: Review of Strategic Plan recommendations from the ThreeStar Roundtable Workshops held by Younger & Associates

Meeting Coordination

The meeting was coordinated by John Rose and McKenzie Ketron with Bridge Regional, along with Sheila Caldwell, ThreeStar Administrator/Tourism Coordinator for Johnson County.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the draft Strategic Plan recommendations developed from the ThreeStar Roundtable Workshops held by Younger & Associates. The discussion focused on ensuring the recommendations accurately reflect community feedback and identifying practical next steps for each ThreeStar goal area.

Attendance

The following were in attendance:

- Jeff Fritts, Joint Economic & Community Development Committee
- Angie Stout, Joint Economic & Community Development Committee / Johnson County Health Department
- Nela Pleasant, Hometown Service Coalition
- Audra Gerty, Town of Mountain City
- Mayor Jerry Jordan, Town of Mountain City
- Mayor Larry Potter, Johnson County
- Amanda Hall, Johnson County
- Charles Ridlehuber, Doe Mountain Recreation Area
- Joey Beth Souder, Mountain City / Johnson County Community Center
- Sheila Caldwell, ThreeStar Administrator / Tourism Coordinator
- John Rose, Bridge Regional
- McKenzie Ketron, Bridge Regional

Recommended ThreeStar Subcommittee Chairs

The following recommended subcommittee chairs were reviewed:

- **Permanent Farmers Market** – Gina Meade, Skyline Bank; County Commission; Chamber President
- **Wellness & Enhanced Recreation** – Angie Stout, Johnson County Health Department and Town of Mountain City Recreation Advisory Committee
- **Johnson County Business Association** – Jeff Fritts, Retired, Banking Sector
- **Lodging** – Kody Norris, The Kody Norris Show; County Commission

Summary of Discussion

1. Review of Strategic Plan Recommendations

John Rose provided background on Bridge Regional and explained that Bridge is a privately funded nonprofit serving Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. He noted that Bridge invested in the work by Younger & Associates to help Johnson County gather community input and identify practical recommendations for the ThreeStar goals.

The group discussed that the reports were intended to reflect community feedback from the roundtable workshops, not to direct the county on what to do. The purpose of the review was to identify any needed corrections, clarify next steps, and determine where additional support may be helpful.

2. Permanent Farmers Market

The group discussed the need for the Johnson County Farmers Market to further define its minimum needs for a permanent or improved location.

Discussion included:

- The need for a more permanent or improved site
- Location considerations
- Accessibility concerns, including parking surface and mobility access
- Vendor space and the number of current vendors
- Whether the site should include both pavilion space and pop-up tent space
- The need for a small, enclosed area for items that require protection from heat or sun

- Public versus private property considerations
- Liability, maintenance, control, rental use, and revenue-sharing questions
- Potential for a multi-use facility that could serve the Farmers Market and other community purposes

It was noted that the Farmers Market currently has approximately a dozen or more vendors depending on the season, with a mix of produce, baked goods, meats, flowers, honey, crafts, and other local products. The importance of protecting the local farm and food component of the market was also discussed.

Bridge offered to meet with the Farmers Market group to help review the report, discuss the permanent location and structure, and help define next steps.

3. Wellness Center / Enhanced Recreation

The group discussed the proposed wellness/recreation center and agreed that a feasibility study is an important next step before any major decision is made.

Discussion included:

- The need for data to determine whether the project is needed and sustainable
- Potential components such as an indoor pool, gymnasium, indoor walking track, and water therapy opportunities
- The potential benefit to students, seniors, and the broader community
- Possible funding sources, including grants, endowments, earmarks, and state-level opportunities
- The need to be cautious about relying on annual earmarks or recurring government appropriations for operating expenses
- The importance of understanding both construction costs and long-term operating costs

Bridge offered to contact two or three feasibility study firms and obtain quotes for a wellness center and expanded recreation feasibility study. The quotes will be sent to the Mayor's Office for review.

It was also discussed that current expenditure data related to wellness activities in Johnson County could help supplement the feasibility study process.

4. Expanded Recreation

The group discussed several recreation-related projects already underway or in planning stages.

Projects discussed included:

- The county LPRF project related to the pickleball complex
- The Town of Mountain City's recreation planning work
- Expanded trails at Ralph Stout Park
- The Johnson County Trail Association Trail Head Center grant application
- Trail connectivity concepts, including potential connections between Damascus, Mountain City, and other county assets

The group clarified that several projects are moving through different funding or planning tracks and that those should be clearly identified in the final notes and reports.

It was also discussed that the parks and recreation master planning process may overlap with the wellness and enhanced recreation goals, and that coordination will be important where possible.

5. Johnson County Business Association / Chamber Support

The group discussed business support, economic development, and the current challenges related to Chamber of Commerce structure and functionality.

Discussion included:

- The need for better business development support in Johnson County
- The original concept of a business association as a partner to, not necessarily a replacement for, the Chamber
- The need for workplace development, networking, recruitment, and business support
- Concerns about the current functionality of the Chamber website and online presence
- The need for clearer Chamber structure, governance, board roles, and bylaws
- The possibility of hiring a part-time executive director to reduce the burden on volunteers and improve operations
- The value of reviewing similar-sized chambers, such as Unicoi County, as possible models

Bridge offered to help facilitate a conversation with Chamber leadership to better understand needs and opportunities for support. Bridge also offered to assist with economic development, website and marketing support, and project prioritization where appropriate.

The group discussed the importance of addressing Chamber structure and governance issues before hiring staff so the organization is positioned to successfully retain an executive director.

6. Economic Development Support from Bridge

John Rose offered Bridge's assistance in helping Johnson County identify and work on two or three priority economic development projects over the next year.

Discussion included:

- The possibility of Bridge maintaining set office hours in Johnson County twice per month
- Support for grant research and feasibility-related work
- Assistance with economic development outreach
- Potential support for projects identified by county and municipal leadership
- The need for the county and town to identify specific priorities where Bridge can be most helpful

Bridge indicated that its support would be offered at no cost for the areas where Bridge has capacity and expertise.

7. Lodging and Hotel Development

The group discussed lodging as a key economic development and tourism need for Johnson County.

Discussion included:

- Challenges with sewer and water infrastructure needed to support hotel development
- The difficulty of attracting traditional hotel development without adequate utility capacity
- The possibility of working with existing properties for redevelopment rather than focusing only on new construction
- Potential opportunities for boutique hotel concepts
- The importance of identifying available buildings or properties that could be considered for redevelopment
- Health and safety concerns related to problematic or declining motel properties
- The role of the industrial development board and local leadership in identifying possible redevelopment opportunities
- The impact of short-term rentals on lodging capacity and housing availability
- The importance of coordinating lodging conversations with broader tourism and economic development efforts

Bridge offered to meet with the Mayors to discuss how they may be able to assist with the lodging development process and identify the next practical steps.

Action Items

The following action items were identified:

1. **Bridge Regional** will contact two or three feasibility study firms and obtain quotes for a wellness center and expanded recreation feasibility study.
 2. **Bridge Regional** will send feasibility study quotes to the Mayor's Office once received.
 3. **Angie Stout / appropriate partners** will pull current expenditure data related to wellness activities in Johnson County and share it with John Rose / Bridge to supplement the feasibility study process.
 4. **Sheila Caldwell / appropriate partners** will help coordinate a meeting with the Johnson County Farmers Market group to review the ThreeStar report, discuss the permanent farmers market location and structure, and define next steps.
 5. **County and municipal leadership** will identify two or three priority economic development projects where Bridge may be able to assist over the next year.
 6. **Bridge Regional** will coordinate with the Mayors to discuss lodging development challenges and possible assistance.
 7. **Bridge Regional / appropriate partners** will pursue an in-person meeting with the Johnson County Chamber of Commerce executive committee to offer support and discuss Chamber structure, marketing, website functionality, and potential staffing needs.
 8. **Chamber leadership** will review Bridge's offer of assistance and determine whether to accept support and identify next steps.
 9. **Chamber leadership** will evaluate whether hiring a part-time executive director is feasible.
 10. **Chamber leadership** will review governance, board structure, and bylaws before hiring an executive director.
 11. **Chamber representatives** will work with the Chamber treasurer to determine who is currently paying the Chamber website domain and hosting bill and identify steps to restore and update the website.
 12. **Appropriate partners** will identify a Chamber of Commerce in a similar-sized community, such as Unicoi County, to review as a possible model for structure and operations.
-

Next Steps

Bridge Regional will send the final review of the meeting once their notes have been updated.

A copy of the Strategic Plan recommendations from the roundtable workshops held by Younger & Associates was provided to those in attendance and will be shared with those who were unable to attend.

The Joint ECD Committee and subcommittee chairs will continue reviewing the recommendations and working with Bridge Regional and local partners to determine practical next steps for each ThreeStar goal area.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with appreciation expressed to all participants for their time, input, and continued commitment to moving Johnson County's ThreeStar goals forward.

3. The electrician spent two weeks bringing the building into a safe electrical condition. Over the years, a number of electrical modifications had been made incorrectly. At this point, the building should be safe from an electrical standpoint. Additional electrical work will still be required once the office remodeling is complete. Lighting upgrades and electrical service for machinery will also need to be addressed.
4. Plumbing work has progressed. We now have water in the building with no leaks. Most of the bathrooms are operational, except for those in the section of the building closest to the creek. We still need to determine how that section receives water, or we will need to run a new water line to that area.
5. Replacement of all man doors is scheduled to begin on 06/18/2026.
6. All overhead doors and dock seals are on order and will be replaced.
7. General Cleaning of interior and exterior of the building has been completed

Next Steps

1. Heating and cooling systems
2. Office remodeling
3. Parking lot and driveway sealing/repair
4. Exterior metal repairs and repainting
5. Concrete barriers around the building
6. Internal security cages behind exterior doors

Project Update

At this point, One Horse is no longer part of the project. I currently have four Turkish suppliers that are very interested in moving forward.

The concept I have proposed to the Turkish manufacturers is to establish the current building as a modern machining center, with the ability to expand as needed to support increased machining demand. The machining center would support multiple manufacturers by producing firearm frames for each company.

Each manufacturer would have its own autonomous assembly facility on the six-acre property. Firearm kits would arrive either by water through the Port of Savannah, Georgia, or by air through Atlanta, Georgia. From there, the kits would be trucked to Mountain City.

Test firing would be handled either through a test range built on the property, a prefabricated test range, or multiple ranges located on the property.

The Turkish companies currently interested in participating in this project include:

Girsan
Balikli
Adler
UTAS
ATA

On average, each of these manufacturers employs approximately 200 to 250 people. Collectively, they employ more than 1,100 people in Türkiye.

Why This Project Structure Makes Sense

1. The machining center would not be dependent on one product line or one manufacturer.
2. The machining center could also support work outside of the firearms industry.

3. By building a very modern machining operation, production costs should be similar to, or lower than, overseas manufacturing.
4. This structure allows each overseas manufacturer to remain autonomous while reducing jealousy, overlap, and redundancy.
5. Depending on how the operation is structured, certain office staff, maintenance staff, and production workers could potentially be shared among the manufacturers.
6. If production volumes are high enough, a common finishing and heat-treatment operation could be established.
7. Transportation from the airport or ocean port could be consolidated onto one truck for delivery to the compound.
8. A shared security system and security staff could be established as required.
9. Outbound transportation to trucking hubs, UPS, FedEx, or postal services could also be consolidated to reduce overall shipping costs.

Thanks

Keith

On Thursday, May 21st, 2026 at 1:48 PM, office mayor <office.mayor@johnsoncountyttn.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon, gentlemen:

We hope this finds you well and things are moving along as planned. The mayor asked that I forward the attached correspondence from Bill Walsh. He said that you should be aware of Phillips and HAAS. And he made a promise to bill that he would forward this information to you if he got it together.

Thank you,

Amanda J. Hall

Assistant to
Johnson County Mayor
Larry Potter

- **Requests for Support:** Assistance with state "fast track" equipment grants, building acquisition, and workforce training.
- **Timeline:** Full assembly in 9–12 months, though partial operations could begin sooner.
- **Strategic Goals:** Seeking "Defense Ready" infrastructure certification and looking to connect with local night vision manufacturers.

IV. PROJECT UPDATES (MAYOR POTTER)

- **Sink Mountain:** Project remains wide open with additional components being added.
- **National Guard Armory:** Officially renamed the “CPL William C. Mosier Memorial Building.” Completion set for April 29, 2026. A vote is scheduled for May 5, with keys to follow. The cosmetology program with the school system will begin next year.
- **Meat Processing Facility:** Brief status update provided on the ongoing project.
- **Transfer Station:** Working on a \$500k equipment and recycling grant. Funds will be used for a new concrete attendant building.
- **Hotel/Motel Recruitment:** A meeting was held last week; negotiations are in the preliminary "foot in the door" stage.

V. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Parkdale / EAA:** Closing on a building this Wednesday.
- **Parkdale Building:** A prospect recently chose a location in Kentucky instead. The committee is awaiting feedback from the realtor regarding new leads.

VI. TOURISM & THREESTAR UPDATES (SHEILA CALDWELL)

- **Tourism:** Update provided on "America 250" projects.
- **ThreeStar:** Awaiting "2 Star" documentation. Update provided on Roundtable Workshops and the Younger Associates analysis.

VII. DISASTER RECOVERY (MAYOR JORDAN & MAYOR POTTER)

- **FEMA/Roads:** Weekly Friday meetings continue. The long-term goal is full fund recovery by 2029. The City expects \$470k in reimbursements next month. FEMA recently denied one claim, though an appeal/reversal is anticipated.

- **Parks:** Construction has begun on a new bathroom facility at Ralph Stout Park, with a completion deadline of June 30.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS & ADJOURNMENT

No other matters were brought before the committee. The meeting was adjourned.
