

City starts process to fund upcoming projects

The City of Dickson began the process of funding three major capital projects by authorizing the sale of bonds.

At its Jan. 5, 2026, meeting, the City Council unanimously approved Resolution #2026-9 authorizing the incurrence of indebtedness of “not to exceed \$80 million to provide funding for certain projects;” specifically, construction of an aquatic/recreation center at Henslee Park, construction of a new City Center in downtown and construction of a new Dickson Fire Department station and training center on Marshall Stuart Drive.

City Administrator David Travis told the council he anticipates the projects will be in the \$60 million-\$65 million range but wants to give the projects some extra financial room.

“Our target number is more along the lines of 65 million (dollars), but we felt like we needed to give ourselves some cushion,” Administrator Travis told the council. “This doesn’t require us to go out and borrow \$80 million. You’re not voting right now to go borrow \$80 million tonight. This is just more of an informative resolution to let you know that’s what we’re intending to go to the bond market for these three projects and it could cost anywhere between 60 and 80 million (dollars).”

The council also unanimously approved a resolution to engage Oakdale Municipal Advisors, LLC to provide services to facilitate the financing through the bond market.

Mayor Don L. Weiss Jr. explained Oakdale will provide the council with amortization schedules “before you vote to spend any money that would make us go to the bond market. So, we’re not spending any money tonight. We have to have this to be able to converse with Oakdale to start that process.”

Administrator Travis said the city’s annual debt service will be determined by what interest rates are in place when the bonds are sold. Based on current rates, he estimated the cost to the city will be “probably somewhere between 4 and 4.5 million (dollars) a year.”

“But we don’t see going for the 80 million at all,” Mayor Weiss added. “We really think it will be in the 60-65 (million) if we decide to fund all three all three of those projects.”

Administrator Travis said the administration is looking at several funding options, including using some of the city’s \$22 million reserves to fund all or part of the new fire department, estimated to cost around \$5 million. He said construction of a new City Center could enable the city to sell its current City Hall and use those proceeds for funding part of the debt.

“There’s lots of pieces to move around as we go through this,” Administrator Travis said. “If we want to pay off some of our other debt, (it will) free up some money.”

Mayor Weiss reminded the council that when the 2025-26 budget was presented in June, the city’s total indebtedness was \$8.8 million, which the city’s auditor has said is extremely low for a city the size of Dickson.

Administrator Travis said some of the city’s debts will be paid off in the coming year and the potential sales of City Hall and the current Dickson Fire Department Station #2 could help pay off more debt.

“We really intend to be 30 million (dollars) on the City Center, 30 million (dollars) on the aquatic center and 5 (million dollars)” on the new fire station and training center, Travis said. “That’s what we’re shooting for.”

To help stay within those target figures, the city has approved Construction Manager at Risk contracts with Nabholz Construction Corp. for fire station #2, Solomon Builders, Inc. for the

aquatic/recreation center and Hoar Construction, LLC for the city center. Travis said the CMAR contracts allow the contractors to be a part of the design process in order to hold down costs and then provide the city a guaranteed maximum price for the projects.

Administrator Travis said by holding down expenses, paying off some of the city's current debt, reallocating funds currently in the city's budget and utilizing some of the city's reserves, he does not anticipate a property tax increase will be necessary for the projects.

"We're not planning to raise taxes," Travis said. "There's lots of ways we're looking at saving some money. We've done really good in saving for a rainy day and we're looking at using some of that money to pay off some of this other debt and free up some of that debt service money that we're using now."

"Our department heads do a very good job of managing their budgets and most of our department heads come in under budget every year," Mayor Weiss added.

The council unanimously approved Resolution #2026-9 authorizing the incurrence of indebtedness up to \$80 million, Resolution #2026-10 allowing the city to reimburse itself from the bonds for some of the expenses already incurred for the projects and Resolution #2026-11 to engage the services of Oakdale Municipal Advisors for the bond process for a fee not to exceed \$85,000.

Also at the Jan. 5 meeting, the City Council:

- Unanimously approved Resolution #2026-1 to approve Southern Architecture Workshop LLC to design Dickson Fire Department Station #2 and a training center under the Master Services Agreement. Mayor Weiss announced the city has closed on the 7.28 acres of property on Marshall Stuart Drive donated by The Jackson Foundation for the new station;
- Unanimously approved Resolution #2026-3 to approve Nabholz Construction Corp. to build the new fire station #2 and training center under a Construction Manager at Risk contract;
- Unanimously approved Resolution #2026-4 to approve Phase II of an Environmental Site Assessment by ECS Southeast, LLC for the aquatic/recreation center at Henslee Park; and
- Unanimously approved Resolution #2026-5 to approve Phase II of an Environmental Site Assessment by ECS Southeast, LLC for the proposed City Center on South Main Street.

The city is proposing to build a 6,000-square-foot fire station on Marshall Stuart Drive to replace the current Dickson Fire Department Station #2 on Pringle Drive in Pomona and add a training center.

The council has approved an agreement with the Dickson County Family YMCA to operate a new aquatic/recreation center in Henslee Park that will include a natatorium, gymnasium, fitness center, classrooms, meeting spaces and possible early childhood development center. The YMCA has agreed to contribute \$10 million over the term of the debt for constructing the center. The operational Memorandum of Understanding requires that the facility be open to YMCA members and non-members who would pay a daily fee.

The city is currently designing a multi-story City Center in the area of the Municipal Building on South Main Street that would house all of the city's administrative offices, the police department, municipal court and the city council chambers. During demolition of the Municipal Building and construction of the new City Center, the police department and municipal court would temporarily relocate to the former Senior Center building on West Walnut Street after

Nashville State Community College moves to the new Dickson County Higher Education Campus on Highway 46.