

Lanesboro City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 2, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Lanesboro City Council Chambers

Present Members:

Mindy Albrecht-Benson Chase Bakke Joe Cullen Alicia Pearson Kathryn Wade

Staff:

Mitchell Walbridge Darla Taylor David Haugen Mark Lawstuen Jerod Wagner
 Joseph O’Koren Michelle Marotzke

Mayor Pearson called the regular meeting of the Lanesboro City Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. Agenda Approval: A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to approve the agenda as presented; Member Wade seconded the motion. All city council members voted in favor; Motion carried.

B. Public Comments:

- a. Sandy Webb shared information about the Lanesboro Community Theatre’s upcoming community reading sessions of *A Wrinkle in Time*.

C. Consent Agenda:

- a. Accounts Payable
- b. Resolution 2026-25 – Accepting Donations to the Lanesboro Fire Department
- c. Resolution 2026-26 – Accepting Donations to the Lanesboro Public Library
- d. Resolution 2026-27 – Authorizing Application to the Clean Water Revolving Fund for the TH250 Rehab Collection System Project
- e. Resolution 2026-28 – Authorizing Application to the Drinking Water Revolving Fund for the TH250 Watermain Replacement Project
- f. Resolution 2026-29 – Authorizing Application to the Drinking Water Revolving Fund for the Lead Service Line Replacement Project
- g. Buffalo Bill Days Fireworks Permit

A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to approve the Consent Agenda; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. All city council members voted in favor; Motion carried.

Department Updates

A. Fire Department: Fire Chief Robert Wagner presented an annual department update to the City Council.

- There were 23 calls in rural townships and 7 calls within city limits during 2025.
- The department conducted training sessions in 2025 that included swift water rescue, SCBA smoke trailer, electric car fires, grain bin extrication, radio training, CPR training, and pumper training.
- C.D. Hanson was appointed as a new member.
- The department conducted 5 CRP burns that acted as additional training opportunities.
- Future capital purchases include replacement of the SCBAs and a new first responder truck.

B. Police Department: Police Chief Blaise Sass provided an annual department update to the City Council.

- Recent vehicle replacements include at 2026 Chevy Silverado which will replace the Chief’s squad vehicle, and a 2026 Dodge Durango has arrived replacing one of the deputy squad vehicles.
- Two part-time officers were hired in October of 2025, though one of them took a full-time employment opportunity with the Fillmore County Sheriff’s Office.

- The 2025 call volume was an estimated 1,600 Incident Case Reports. Police Chief Sass noted that there has been a significant increase in calls centered on fraud, scams, or identity theft.

Continued Business

A. Discuss Tax Abatement and Development Agreement – Sparrow Valley Properties, LLC: City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge stated that a 30-day Notice to Cure was sent to Sparrow Valley Properties, LLC on February 4, 2026. As of the City Council meeting, Sparrow Valley Properties, LLC remains out of compliance with Events of Default noted in the Tax Abatement and Development Agreement. Specifically, Events of Default not in compliance include delinquency of property tax payments for collection years 2024 and 2025, delinquent utility charges, no submitted evidence that plumbing code violations have been resolved, and multiple payment periods past due on a loan issued by the City of Lanesboro's Economic Development Authority. Administrator Walbridge asked the City Council to consider the City's next steps in contract enforcement if the Events of Default are not cured by the March 06, 2026 deadline. Administrator Walbridge explained that the next enforcement actions to be considered would be terminating the Tax Abatement and Development Agreement and calling the loan due in full. City Attorney Joseph O'Koren explained that there is a considerable timeline on executing the dissolution of the Agreement.

A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to terminate the Tax Abatement and Development Agreement and call the loan balance due in full if the Events of Default are not cured by the March 06, 2026 deadline; Member Wade seconded the motion. During discussion, members questioned whether there was an alternative pathway to work with Sparrow Valley Properties, LLC, but also noted that no progress since the Notice to Cure was delivered.

Brooke Pfeffer, representing Sparrow Valley Properties, LCC, was recognized by Mayor Pearson to comment on the status of Events of Default. Pfeffer stated that they have not received abatement payments to pay property taxes for 505 Parkway Avenue South and utility charge delinquency is caused by poor rental tenants. Pfeffer stated she was not given a copy of the Department of Labor and Industry's findings on plumbing code violations until January 2026. Pfeffer also stated Sparrow Valley Properties, LLC did not have funds to pay the EDA loan. Pfeffer expressed frustration that city staff have not provided a plan to address the financial challenges Sparrow Valley Properties, LLC faces.

Administrator Walbridge explained that EDA assistance does not extend to correcting the financial situation of a private LLC or business. He stated that he would not direct Economic Development Director to work through any financial planning for a private entity unless the City Council gave him a direct order otherwise, which Administrator Walbridge did not recommend.

Following discussion, all members voted in favor of the motion; Motion carried.

New Business

A. Consider Contract with STAR Energy Services for Data Collection: Administrator Walbridge explained the Lanesboro Public Utilities Commission has put a moratorium on any new solar interconnection applications due to difficulty following a recent application. MiEnergy and its contracted electrical engineers have difficulty gauging how a new solar system affects the overall electric system in calculating how much back fed energy would hit various substations. The Public Utility Commission recommended approval of a contract with STAR Energy Services to complete data collection, which would in turn allow lifting the moratorium.

Under the proposed contract, the scope of services includes data collection of GPS location, pole height and class, primary structure configuration in accordance with RUS codes, conductor size and type, direction of feed, point-to-point sourcing for meters, and photographic documentation for primary collection components plus meters. The estimated cost is \$33,570.

A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to approve the proposed contract; Member Wade

seconded the motion. Member Bakke asked if Attorney O’Koren had reviewed the contract. Attorney O’Koren did not have any concerns. All city council members voted in favor; Motion carried.

B. Consider Bids for TH250 Project Geotechnical Engineering Services: Brian Malm, City Engineer from Bolton & Menk, Inc., explained addition information is needed to design the watermain and forcemain connections from TH250 across the river to Norway Drive. Original borings did not provide adequate information. Three bids were obtained, with the lowest bid submitted by Terracon at a cost of \$14,300. A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to award Terracon the contract for services based on its bid; Member Bakke seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; Motion carried.

C. Consider Revolving Loan Fund Application for 3 Peas in a Pod, LLC: Administrator Walbridge shared the EDA Board’s recommendation for issuance of a \$20,000 loan to 3 Peas in a Pod, LLC with a term of 7 years and 2 percent interest per annum. The proposal for loan funds is to help with start-up costs by replacing some freezer and refrigeration equipment. The business entity will be The Scoop, which is taking over operations on what was Another Time Ice Cream Parlor.

A motion was made by Mayor Pearson to approve the loan application with the terms recommended by the Lanesboro EDA Board; Member Wade seconded the motion. All city council members voted in favor; Motion carried.

D. Consider Street/Parking Closure Application for Sylvan Brewing, LLC: Administrator Walbridge stated that Sylvan Brewing is requesting renewal of its annual permit to close parking spaces in front of its building to accommodate mobile food units. Mayor Pearson noted not issues or complaints had been reported in the last 12 months. A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to approve the application for permit renewal; Member Wade seconded the motion. All city council members voted in favor; Motion carried.

E. Consider Fire Department Request – Badges: Fire Chief Robert Wagner presented a proposal requesting approval to purchase badges for fire department members. Chief Wagner explained the badges are worn at formal trainings events as well as retired department members’ funerals. Chief Wagner also stated that ordering badges for new members has been something that has lapsed as transitions of fire chiefs have occurred. Member Albrecht-Benson asked if there were more cost-effective alternatives and whether the badges are returned to allow use by new members when a member leaves the department. Member Cullen also questioned whether a less expensive alternative has been explored.

Administrator Walbridge suggested that he work with Chief Wagner to develop a uniform policy prior to the purchase so that the City Council can establish a clear expectation of clothing and uniform allowance that remains consistent.

A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to table discussion until the April meeting at which time a draft policy could be reviewed; Member Wade seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; Motion carried.

Mayor Pearson adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk