

**Lanesboro City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 6, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
Lanesboro Community Center Meeting Room & Zoom**

Present Members:

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

Staff:

☒ Mitchell Walbridge ☒ Darla Taylor ☐ David Haugen ☐ Mark Lawstuen ☐ Jerod Wagner
☒ Tara Johnson ☒ Joseph O’Koren

Guests: Cheryl Neary, Pam Engebretson, Bonita Underbakke, Jakob Burgos, Ken Soiney, Tom Brudvig, Hannah Wingert, Peter Torkelson, Vicki Torkelson, Pat Gemlo, Dale Forster, Steve Harris, Susie Harris, Jon Nicol, Delia Bell, Mary Bell, Heidi Dybing, Jonathan Levine, Don Bell, Pam Nuenfeldt, Phil Dybing, Linda Tacke, Tamara DeGarmo, Tianna DeGarmo, Jon Buggs, Sandy Webb, Sarah Pieper, Anna Loney, Ceil Allen, Kay Wold, Carrie Howe, Richard Harrel, Betsy Holbrook, Kate O’Neary, Stacey Schultz, Gabby Kreidemacher;
Via Zoom: Deane Benson, Sheila Walbridge, Brenda Bonney, Shirley Mulder, Patrick Stein, Jess Benson, Susan Riggott, Bill, Leah Steding, Molly Gage

City Administrator Walbridge administered the Oath of Office to Alicia Pearson, Joe Cullen, and Kathryn Wade.

Regular Meeting

Call to Order: Mayor Pearson called the regular meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

- A. Agenda Approval:** City Administrator Walbridge requested the approval of the City of Lanesboro Pay Equity Study be added to the Consent Agenda and that Resolution 2025-14 be added as part of New Business item B, the City Council Board/Commission Liaisons for 2025. Member Pearson entered a motion to add the two additions to the agenda; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve the agenda with the following additions to the agenda.

- Robert Rules of Order and Minnesota Open Meeting Law after the Agenda Approval
- Meeting Recordings under Approval of Minutes
- Summary of Public Comments under New Business
- Deer Overpopulation under New Business
- City Council Forum under New Business
- Special Committee for the Highway 250 Project under New Business

Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

- B. Robert’s Rules of Order and Open Meeting Law:** Mayor Pearson highlighted the purpose of Robert’s Rules of Order in ensuring effective meeting facilitation and noted the availability of handouts for attendees.

C. Public Comments:

- Phil Dybing addressed the Lanesboro City Council regarding the Highway 250 Project and the cost of engineering services associated with the project. Dybing expressed he thinks engineering expenses that Bolton and Menk estimated for engineering services are higher than necessary. Dybing suggested alternatives to the currently contracted engineering services may need to be investigated.
- Ken Soiney addressed the Lanesboro City Council as the owner/operator of a local outfitting business. Soiney expressed he feels that the success of his business is being targeted by some members of the community. Soiney also stated he unsure why some are trying to push him out of the community. Soiney also expressed concerns over the 2024 municipal general election and rumors his eligibility as a mayoral candidate.

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D. Approval of Minutes: Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Member Bakke seconded the motion. After discussion about the public comment sections of the minutes of December 2, 2024 and December 18, 2024, Member Albrecht-Benson rescinded her motion. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to amend the minutes of December 2, 2024 public comment section to read, “Loney also addressed the city council in opposition to the proposed library board ordinance. Peter Torkelson addressed the city council in opposition to the proposed library board ordinance. Stacey Schultz addressed the city council in opposition to the proposed library board ordinance. Sarah Pieper addressed the city council in opposition to the proposed library board ordinance” and the December 18, 2024 public comment section to read, “The following individuals addressed the Lanesboro City Council in opposition to the proposed ordinances regarding the Lanesboro Public Library Board...”; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Member Wade entered a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2024 Lanesboro City Council regular meeting and December 18, 2024 Lanesboro City Council special meeting as amended; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Mayor Pearson requested that the meeting recordings be made accessible online. Administrator Walbridge stated he would investigate what the city has for online storage capacity and the feasibility of posting recordings.

E. Consent Agenda:

- a. Accounts Payable
- b. Lanesboro Claydusters Gambling Permit Application
- c. Resolution 2025-01: Designating Official Depository
- d. Resolution 2025-02: Designating Official Newspaper
- e. Resolution 2025-03: Authorizing Lawful Gambling for the Lanesboro Fire Department Relief Association
- f. Resolution 2025-04: Authorizing Signature Authority for the City of Lanesboro
- g. Resolution 2025-05: Establishing Mileage Reimbursement Rate
- h. Resolution 2025-06: Appointing Trustees for the Lanesboro Fire Department Relief Association
- i. Resolution 2025-07: Appointing Lanesboro Fire Department Officers
- j. Resolution 2025-08: Authorizing Membership Renewal in Regional Safety Group
- k. Smith-Schafer Letters of Engagement for 2024 Audit: City of Lanesboro & Lanesboro Public Utilities
- l. Lanesboro Public Library Board Resignation – Alissa Sindelar
- m. Lodging Licenses Root River Hospitality, LLC
- n. City of Lanesboro Pay Equity Study

Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Member Bakke seconded the motion. City Administrator Walbridge explained the purpose of the regional safety group as well as the required pay equity study. Motion carried with all in favor.

Department Reports

- A. Administration:** City Administrator Walbridge provided the Administration Department update. A review of 2024 fourth quarter activities was provided including the DNR’s Floodplain Program Community Assistance Contact meeting, general election administration, transitioning from Google Workspace to Microsoft Business 365, the 2025 fiscal year budgetary process, development of the comprehensive plan request for proposals, and revision to the city’s records retention workflow. In the first quarter of 2025, city administration will be working on reviewing the comprehensive plan proposals, investigating economic development professional services options, participation in Fillmore County’s update to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, preparation for the Lanesboro Rural Fire Association meeting, and collaboration with the city engineers and MnDOT on the TH250 road/utility construction project.
- B. Public Works:** City Administrator Walbridge provided the Public Works Department update on behalf of Public Works Supervisor David Haugen. In the last quarter of 2024, the Public Works Department

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has worked on pouring a new cement foundation slab on a Sylvan Park shelter, assisted the DNR with the Sylvan Park pond project, repaired a waterline in Sylvan Park that feeds the bath house and dump station, completed boulevard tree trimming, removed six trees in Sylvan Park, cold-patched potholes as needed, completed winter plowing on an as-needed basis, and collaborated with Lanesboro Public Utilities staff on repairing various watermain breaks.

Continued Business

- A. Consider Request to Relocate Civil Defense Siren:** Mayor Pearson entered a motion to discuss the relocation of the city's civil defense siren; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. City Administrator Walbridge gave a summary of the request letter submitted by Phil Dybing as well as a history of the placement of the siren's current location. The current placement of the siren was completed through a joint effort between the City of Lanesboro, Fillmore County Emergency Management, and contracted services through Federal Warning Systems. The cost associated with the placement of the siren was roughly \$20,600. Motion carried with Members Pearson, Bakke, Cullen, and Wade voting yes and Member Albrecht-Benson voting no.
- Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to keep the civil defense siren in its current location; Member Wade seconded the motion. The motion carried with Members Bakke, Cullen, Wade, and Benson voting in favor; Mayor Pearson voted against the motion.

New Business

- A. Consider Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tempore for 2025:** Member Wade entered a motion to appoint Member Albrecht-Benson as mayor pro-tempore for 2025; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. City Council Board/Commission Liaisons for 2025:**
- Park Board: Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to appoint Kathryn Wade as the Park Board liaison for 2025; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
 - Public Utilities Commission: Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to appoint Joe Cullen as the public utilities commission liaison for 2025; Member Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
 - Economic Development Authority: Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-14 appointing Member Albrecht-Benson to fill the city council member vacancy on the EDA board; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- C. Consider Resolution 2025-09 Appointing Members to the Lanesboro Planning and Zoning Commission:** Mayor Pearson entered a motion to discuss the candidates for the Planning and Zoning Commission; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Members discussed the applicants for the commission.
- Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to appoint Mayor Alicia Pearson to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a one-year term; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to appoint Aaron Gage and Jonathan Levine to the Planning and Zoning Commission, each for a three-year term. Motion carried with all in favor.
- Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-09; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- D. Consider Resolution 2025-10 Appointing Members to the Lanesboro Public Utilities Commission:** Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to reappoint Brian Roelofs to the Lanesboro Public Utilities Commission for a three-year term; Member Wade seconded the motion. Members discussed the applicants for the open seat with Member Albrecht-Benson noting Roelof's contributions to the commission during his previous term. Mayor Pearson noted she was impressed with Alissa Oppenheimer's background. After discussion, the motion carried with Members Bakke, Cullen, Wade, and Albrecht-Benson voting in favor; Mayor Pearson voted against the motion.

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Member Wade entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10; Member Bakke seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

E. Consider Resolution 2025-11 Appointing Members to the Lanesboro Heritage Preservation

Commission: Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to discuss appointing Susie Harris, Leah Steding, and Kate O’Neary to the Heritage Preservation Commission, each for a two-year term; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Members discussed the applicants with Mayor Pearson noting that a significant number of applicants were received for the commission. The motion carried with all in favor. Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-11; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

F. Consider Resolution 2025-12 Appointing Members to the Lanesboro Public Library Board:

Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to appoint Tamara DeGarmo to the library board; Member Wade seconded the motion. Member Albrecht-Benson noted DeGarmo participates in the community, has an interest in education, and ran for the school board in the 2024 election. Mayor Pearson stated she would like to discuss other applicants for the library board vacancy. Member Albrecht-Benson then rescinded her motion. Members discussed the applicants who were recommended by the library board including Molly Gage, Sarah Pieper, and Tamara DeGarmo. After discussion, Member Wade entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-12 appointing Tamara DeGarmo to fill the library board vacancy for a term ending December 31, 2025; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

G. Consider Resolution 2025-13 Appointing Members to the Lanesboro Park Board: Mayor Pearson entered a motion to appoint Steve Harris to fill the vacancy on the park board for the term that ends on December 31, 2025; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Member Bakke entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-13; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

H. Consider Acceptance of Compeer Financial Grant Funds and Sponsorship Agreement:

Administrator Walbridge explained that the Compeer Financial Grant was applied for by the previous EDA director. Funds are to be used to help facilitate a feasibility study of the development of the city’s property on Rochelle Avenue where the public works facilities are housed. Funds would be used toward getting a commercial appraisal of the property and potentially an environmental study. Administrator Walbridge noted that any development plans for the proposed area would need city council approval. Member Bakke entered a motion to accept the grant funds and enter into the sponsorship agreement and that the budget for the feasibility study does not exceed \$5,000; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

I. Consider Approval of Publication Summary – Ordinance 54.06 Utility Fee Schedule: Administrator Walbridge explained that a summary of publication rather than the entire ordinance yields cost savings in publishing the ordinance amendments and meets the legal requirements of ordinance revision. Member Bakke entered a motion to approve the drafted summary of publication; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

J. Summary of Public Comments: Mayor Pearson suggested that during the regular city council meetings, a summary of the public comments made at the meeting be read into the record. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to add a summary of public comments to the future meeting agendas; Member Wade seconded the motion. Members discussed the suggested agenda addition and concluded that if the public comments are documented in the official meeting minutes, no readback summary is needed. No action was taken on this day.

K. Deer Overpopulation: Mayor Pearson requested that the city council discuss deer overpopulation concerns in city limits. Administrator Walbridge shared that he had been in contact with the DNR’s regional wildlife manager who provided non-invasive recommendations for population control within city limits. Administrator Walbridge explained that a controlled hunt may be difficult to coordinate as private property owners would need to approve of access to their land. The current city ordinance only allows properly licensed hunters to discharge a firearm for hunting purposes on properties zoned Rural Agriculture (RA) District. No action was taken on this day.

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- L. City Townhall/Forum:** Mayor Pearson stated she would like to schedule a city townhall/forum for community members to have interactive conversation with the city council. Ideally, Mayor Pearson stated she would like to schedule the townhall/forum in February. Member Bakke entered a motion to table the item; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Members discussed whether regular townhalls and community forums are needed, or if they should be limited for special city projects. The council asked Administrator Walbridge to see if other communities in the area have regular city council forums in their cities. Motion carried with all in favor.
- M. Highway 250 Project Committee:** Mayor Pearson stated she would like to appoint a special committee for the Highway 250 Project. Some members questioned what the purpose of the committee would be. Mayor Pearson explained an example of how she would like business owners to have input into the project. City Administrator Walbridge explained that the city's Planning Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, and Economic Development Authority will already play a role in communicating feedback to the engineers and MnDOT. Mayor Pearson stated she would like the public to have a voice on the project as well. Administrator Walbridge further explained that groups like this already exist, such as the Lanesboro Entrepreneurial Action Network. Administrator Walbridge encouraged waiting to appoint any special committees so that works do not formulate goals that run contradictory to one another and so that any specially appointed committee is tasked with specifics regarding the project. Member Bakke entered a motion to table the discussion until the City Administrator has time to check with the city engineer and investigate whether special committees have ever been appointed in other communities for projects like the TH250 project; Member Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Pearson adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk