

**Lanesboro City Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 3, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.  
Lanesboro Community Center Meeting Room & Zoom**

*Member Albrecht-Benson participated remotely as a voting member from Gulf Dunes #412, 376 Santa Rosa Blvd., Fort Walton Beach, FL.*

**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:** Brian Malm, Hannah Wingert, Bonita Underbakke, David Harrenstein, Joan Finnegan, Wayne Finnegan, Renee Bergstrom, Gene Bergstrom, Phil Dybing, Thomas Suprenant, David Susag, Lynn Susag, Brian McConnell, Tracy Waters, Kate O’Neary, Sarah Pieper, Heidi Dybing, Brian Roelofs, Joe Goetzke, Mary Bell, Tamara DeGarmo, Delia Bell, Jon Nichol, Jakob Burgoss; *Via Zoom:* Shirley Mulder, Sjeila Goetzke, Robin Kaufman, Deane Benson, Don Bell, Annie Nichols, Nancy Martinson, Allison Wagner, Joe Deden, PE, Vicki Chambard-Torkelson, Chris Janson, Stacey Schultz, Jonathan Levine, Cindy Naas

**Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order:** Mayor Pearson called the regular meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

- A. Agenda Approval:** City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge requested that the appointment of Curtiss Hanson to the Lanesboro Volunteer Fire Department be added to the Consent Agenda and that Resolution 2025-18 Accepting Donations be added to New Business. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to add the requested items to the agenda; Member Wade Seconded the motion. No vote was taken on the motion.

Mayor Pearson requested the following items under New Business:

- Positive News
- Highway 250 Project Update as a standing agenda item
- EDA Director Update
- Library Board and City Council Bridge Meeting
- Siren Safety Postings

Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve the agenda with Mayor Pearson’s requested additions; Member Cullen seconded the motion. Members discussed each requested topic separately. After discussion, the request to add Positive News, Highway 250 Project Update as a standing agenda item, and the EDA Director Update were withdrawn.

Member Bakke entered a motion to add Library Board and City Council Bridge meeting to the agenda; Member Pearson seconded the motion. Members Pearson, Bakke, Wade, and Cullen voted in favor of the motion; Member Albrecht-Benson voted against the motion. Motion carried.

Member Bakke entered a motion to add Siren Safety Postings to the agenda; Member Cullen seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Administrator Walbridge requested that his agenda requests be considered as no action was taken at the time of his original request. Member Wade entered a motion to add the appointment of Curtiss Hanson to the Lanesboro Volunteer Fire Department to the Consent Agenda and Resolution 2025-18 Accepting Donations to New Business; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve the amended agenda; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

- B. Public Comments:**

Approved 03/03/2025

- Phil Dybing addressed the Lanesboro City Council regarding the civil defense siren located near his property. Dybing articulated concerns about the siren's volume being a health and wellbeing issue that requires city council attention. Dybing referenced a FEMA resource guide provided to him by Brenda Pohlman of Fillmore County Public Health. Dybing also referenced the siren installation manual citing that the siren area should have warnings posted and that access should be restricted to the area. Dybing stated that Attorney O'Koren should be looking into the specifics of this issue.
- Tom Suprenant addressed the Lanesboro City Council about the civil defense siren and its volume level when the siren is activated. Suprenant expressed that the high volume is a health issue.
- Wayne Finnegan addressed the Lanesboro City Council about the civil defense siren and its volume being a health issue.
- Kate O'Neary addressed the Lanesboro City Council about property damage that happened to her fence on December 13, 2024. At 11:30 p.m. that evening, O'Neary states she heard a crash and saw a car in a collision with a utility pole near her property. O'Neary states that an intoxicated driver was apprehended that night, and she later noticed a section of her privacy fence was damaged. O'Neary alleges that the driver taken into custody is responsible for the damage to her fence. O'Neary also alleges that the Preston Police Department refuses to do anything to help her since there were no firsthand witnesses or video surveillance of the damage to her fence. O'Neary expressed concerns about the level of service provided by the Preston Police Department.
- Sarah Pieper addressed the Lanesboro City Council in support of relocating the civil defense siren. Pieper stated it is the city's duty to investigate the issue more. Pieper also addressed the city council about standing items she would like to see on the agenda, such as the Highway 250 project.

**C. Approval of Minutes:**

- a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting, January 6, 2025: Member Wade entered a motion to approve the minutes as submitted; Member Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

**D. Consent Agenda:**

- a. Accounts Payable
- b. Lanesboro Public Library Board Resignation – Jon Buggs
- c. 2025 Lodging License Renewals
- d. Lanesboro Arts Temporary Liquor License Application – February 8, 2025
- e. Lanesboro Arts Temporary Liquor License Application – March 29, 2025
- f. Lanesboro Arts Temporary Liquor License Application – April 5, 2025
- g. Lanesboro Arts Temporary Liquor License Application – June 7, 2025
- h. LACF Temporary Liquor License Application – April 13, 2025
- i. Resolution 2025-15 Accepting Library Donation
- j. Resolution 2025-16 Accepting Fire Department Donations
- k. Resolution 2025-17 Appointing a Fire Department Officer
- l. Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce Grant Application – Fiscal Agent Request
- m. Appointment to the Lanesboro Volunteer Fire Department – Curtiss Hanson

Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Department Reports**

**A. Public Utilities:** Public Utilities Supervisor Jerod Wagner provided the department update for the Lanesboro Public Utilities. Supervisor Wagner reported:

- The wastewater treatment facility has not failed a CBOD test since September 2024. Parts of the processing workflow at the facility have been corrected in recent months.

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- Supervisor Wagner and Administrator Walbridge will be drafting a letter to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency explaining why testing had failed in the past in hopes that it would prevent future litigation or compliance issues based on previous failed test results.
- Lanesboro Public Utilities was awarded a \$250,000 Minnesota Electrical Grid Resilience Grant to help with automation of the diesel generator and cyber security enhancements.

**B. Library:** Library Director Tara Johnson provided the department report for the Lanesboro Public Library. Director Johnson reported:

- Library staff, with the help of volunteers from Friends of the Lanesboro Library, helped Lanesboro Public Schools seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students register for or renew their library cards.
- A Learn to Crochet workshop was held recently with 16 attendees.
- The annual reporting period of public libraries to provide data to the Minnesota Department of Education began on February 3.
- The library conducted a patron survey with 75 respondents.

**C. Heritage Preservation Commission:** Member Albrecht-Benson provided the Heritage Preservation Commission update:

- Members of the commission continue their training based on the Minnesota Heritage Preservation Statewide Training Manual.
- The commission welcomed its two new members and completed an orientation in the commission's January meeting.
- The commission intends to apply for a Lanesboro Area Community Foundation grant to help with restoration of the Sylvan Park Cabin.
- Other grant opportunities are being sought to help with a local historic district designation for the Church Hill area.

### Continued Business

- A. City Town Hall/Forum:** Mayor Pearson noted other Fillmore County cities do not hold city town hall meetings or forums. Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to table City Town Halls/Forums indefinitely; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. Highway 250 Project Committee:** Administrator Walbridge referred to Brian Malm, Bolton and Menk Engineer, to provide an update on the project's public engagement process. Malm explained that the development of the public engagement plan is in progress which will define the plan moving forward. Malm recommended waiting on appointing any sort of committee until the contents of the public engagement plan are reviewed. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to table the Highway 250 Project Committee indefinitely; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Malm provided a brief update on project work. Based on the scoping study, a preliminary layout is being prepared for the city to review. The preliminary layout will be presented to the public for comment prior to the final layout being approved.

### New Business

- A. Consider Approval of Community Medication Drop Box Site:** Administrator Walbridge explained that the installation of medication drop boxes is the Fillmore County Sheriff's Office replacement for the medication take-back days that previously occurred. Having a drop box located in Lanesboro allows individuals with medications to dispose of to do so safely and at a time that is convenient for them. In addition, residents do not need to travel to a neighboring community for access to a drop-off location. Member Wade entered a motion to approve placing a drop box at Lanesboro City Hall; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. Consider Increase to Fire Department Pension:** Administrator Walbridge explained the approval process for Minnesota fire relief association pension increases. The city requires minutes from a Lanesboro Fire Relief Association's Board of Trustee meeting that recommends a pension increase. Administrator Walbridge explained that when a city council ratifies a benefit amount, it accepts the

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obligation to back accrued liabilities should the Association's assets fall short of meeting its pension payment obligations. Also, once a pension benefit level is increased, a city council cannot lower the pension benefit level unless a recommendation from the relief association's board of trustees is received. Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to table the item as the city awaits meeting minutes from the Lanesboro Fire Relief Association Board of Trustees; Member Cullen seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

- C. Comprehensive Plan – Review of Submitted Proposals:** Members discussed the contents of the top three proposals from professional services firms Bolton and Menk, MSA Planning and Design Studio, and CEDA. Members were able to ask questions to consultants from each of the professional services firms. Members said they would like an additional month to review the proposals again and ask more questions of the consultants. Member Wade entered a motion to table discussion until the March city council meeting; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- D. Lanesboro Public Library Board Vacancy:** Administrator Walbridge stated that with the resignation of Jon Buggs from the Lanesboro Public Library Board, there is a vacancy on the board for a term that expires at the end of 2026. Administrator Walbridge recommended that the city council accept applications, get a recommendation from the library board on a candidate to fill the vacancy, and then make an appointment. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to initiate the recommended procedure for filling the board vacancy; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- E. Lanesboro City Council Team Building:** Mayor Pearson suggested the city council participate in a team building session to build rapport with each other. Member Bakke expressed concern about open meeting law and procedures being followed in an informal setting where a quorum of members is present. Member Albrecht-Benson also questioned what type of team building activity would yield benefit. Member Bakke entered a motion to table the item indefinitely; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- F. Resolution 2025-18 Accepting Donations from the Lanesboro Firefighter's Relief Association:** Member Bakke highlighted the Lanesboro Firefighter's Relief Association's donation of \$94,000 to the City of Lanesboro to be used for fire equipment and fire department vehicle replacement. Member Wade entered a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-18 and accept the donation; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- G. Library Board and City Council Bridge Meeting:** Mayor Pearson recommended that the Lanesboro City Council engage in a joint meeting with the Lanesboro Public Library Board as an effort to reset the relationship between the library board and the city council. Member Albrecht-Benson questioned what suggested that there is a poor relationship between the current library board and the city council. Mayor Pearson stated that recent resignations, such as the resignation of Jon Buggs, suggest there is a negative relationship between the library board and the city council. Member Albrecht-Benson asked if Jon Buggs provided any comment on a stressed relationship being the justification for his resignation or if this was Mayor Pearson's speculation. Administrator Walbridge no such indication was provided in Buggs' resignation. Member Bakke requested that this be noted in the official record. Until a new board member is seated, members felt it would be beneficial to hold off on requesting that a joint meeting be scheduled. It was also stated that the library board could request a meeting should they choose to as it was unknown if the library board wanted to engage in a joint meeting. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to table the item indefinitely; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- H. Civil Defense Siren Safety Postings:** Members requested that the city administrator further review any warning sign posting requirements advised by FEMA and obtain estimates on the installation of any required signage. Member Wade entered a motion to table discussion; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

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

Mayor Pearson adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge  
City Administrator/Clerk