

Approved 04/07/2025

**Lanesboro City Council
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 – 6:15 p.m.
Lanesboro Community Center & Zoom**

Member Albrecht-Benson participated remotely from Gulf Dunes #412, 376 Santa Rosa Blvd., Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

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: Mary Bell, Joe Deden, Jon Buggs, Emily Moore, Carol Anderson, Tamara DeGarmo, Brian Roelofs, Vicki Torkelson, Tara Johnson, Dee Slinde, David Hennessey, Pat Gemlo, Dale Forster, Tom Brudvig, Gene Bergstrom, Renee Bergstrom, Cheryl Neary, Carrie Hanson, Jeff Hanson, Krissy Overland, Cheryl Kettner, Jon Buggs, Stela Burdt, Stacey Schultz, CJ Peterson, Lu Hummell, Molly Gage, Aaron Gage, Kathy This, Sarah Kohn, Phil Holtegaard, Sarah Pieper, Betsy Holbrooke, Gwen Harmon, Jon Nicol, Delia Bell, Kate O’Neary, Joel Walbridge, Sheila Walbridge, Jerry Ritter, Vicki McKinney, Kerry Eversole, Cindy Cordes-Eversole, Jon Pieper, Susie Harris, Jennifer Rogers, Adrienne Sweeny; *Via Zoom:* Brooke Kimball, Deane Benson, Phil Dybing, Heidi Dybing, Alayna Joy, Alissa Oppenheimer, Church Hill School Condos, Don Bell, Heather Johnson, Joan Finnegan, Joe Goetzke, Jon Vaughan-Fier, Kristi Ruen, Lester Dunn, Lori Bakke, Lynn Susag, David Susag, Melissa Wagner, Michelle Dunleavy, Pam Flattum, Pat Jones Rebecca Damron, Caleb Lauritsen, Richard Horihan, Maureen Anderson, Nancy Martinson, Robin Krom, Shirley Mulder, Sindelar, Susan Riggott, Blaine Harmony, Linda Tacke, Brooke Pfeffer, Anne Cecko, Carly McNeilus, Cynthia R., Mike Ask, Stephen Rogers

Special Meeting

Call to Order: Mayor Pearson called the regular meeting to order at 6:23 p.m.

- A. Agenda Approval:** Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

New Business

- A. Consideration of Lanesboro City Council Code of Conduct Complaint Against the Mayor:** Mayor Pearson began the discussion by referencing materials she had provided immediately before the meeting. Member Albrecht-Benson asked if she could review the materials, as she was unaware of receiving any documentation as part of the meeting packet. Mayor Pearson stated that she had distributed the documents immediately before calling the meeting to order. Member Albrecht-Benson requested the same documentation provided to the other members for review. Mayor Pearson subsequently emailed the documents to Member Albrecht-Benson. Member Bakke stated for the record that the materials provided by Mayor Pearson were distributed at the meeting and not provided in advance of the meeting. Member Bakke called for a 5 minute recess. Mayor Pearson questioned the rules for this type of meeting and noted that she had not sent the documents prior to the meeting because she did not want to skew the council decision. Member Albrecht-Benson stated that she needed time to review the materials since no time was given before the meeting commenced. She asked for council members’ opinions on whether the special meeting could be adjourned and rescheduled to allow for document review. No action was taken.

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Mayor Pearson then narrated her account of the timeline of events regarding City Administrator Walbridge's decision not to include her requested agenda items on the February 3, 2025, regular city council meeting agenda. Administrator Walbridge stated that he exercised discretion granted to him under Resolution 2017-13: Lanesboro City Council Code of Conduct and Ordinance 30.092: Role of City Administrator. He further stated that he had informed Mayor Pearson multiple times that, while not all her requested agenda items were added by the city administrator, she was welcome to propose them for inclusion during the agenda approval process at the city council meeting.

Member Wade entered a motion to have the city administrator and mayor enter mediation; Member Cullen seconded the motion. Members Wade and Bakke then expressed their desires to move forward in the most positive way possible.

During the discussion, Member Albrecht-Benson asked Mayor Pearson if she understood her role as mayor in a weak mayor system. Member Bakke inquired whether the League of Minnesota Cities could provide documentation outlining the scope of mayoral authority in a weak mayor system. In response, Member Albrecht-Benson read from the League of Minnesota Cities Handbook for Minnesota Cities, stating:

“Under the weak mayor-council plan, administrative as well as legislative authority is the ultimate responsibility of the council unless the council has created an independent board, such as a utilities commission, to handle one or more specific functions... The mayor's powers in a city with a weak mayor-council plan are no greater than those of any other member of the council, with the exception of the mayor's role as presiding officer at council meetings and several other minor duties. No individual councilmember holds specific administrative powers.”

Mayor Pearson stated that she understood the weak mayor system and her role as Mayor. She also felt she had not taken too much of the administrator's time. Mayor Pearson noted that the option to add agenda items during the current meeting was not best practice, and that waiting one month is a long time for agenda items to be added in the future.

Member Cullen appreciates all the ideas and suggestions, however noted that we need to rely on the city administration and would like to see everyone on the same page and working together.

Member Bakke would like to see the conflict resolved quickly.

Mayor Pearson shared that she felt this is a poor use of community resources and her opinion is that it was retaliatory in nature, but stated she was happy to participate in mediation to end this conflict as soon as possible.

Member Albrecht-Benson asked whether the council would address each allegation individually or if mediation alone was being recommended. Member Bakke inquired whether the League of Minnesota Cities could provide mediation services at no cost. Administrator Walbridge confirmed that mediation services are available at no charge through the City's membership with the League.

Mayor Pearson called for a roll call vote on the motion to have the city administrator and mayor enter mediation. Members Wade, Cullen, Bakke, and Pearson voted in favor; Member Albrecht-Benson voted against. Motion carried.

Member Wade entered a motion to adjourn the meeting; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

The special meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk