

**Lanesboro City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 3, 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: Tamara DeGarmo, Betsy Holbrook, Mary Bell, Ceil Allen, Hannah Wingert, Pat Gemlo, Dale Forster, Peter Torkelson, Cindy Eversole, Sheila Walbridge, Sjeila Goetzke, Jon Pieper, Anna Loney, Jon Nicol, Delia Bell, Brian Malm, Sarah Pieper, Brian Roelofs, Chris Janson, Bonita Underbakke, Robin Holbrook; *Via Zoom:* Vicki Chambard-Torkelson, Shirley Mulder, Don Bell, Joe Goetzke, Deane Benson, Jonathan Levine, Judy Kingsbury, Joe Deden, Molly Gage, Phil Dybing, Heidi Dybing, Mike Lamb, Bill, Stephanie, Scott, Jennifer Tracey Waters, Carly McNeilus, Coffee Street Inn, Janet

Regular Meeting

Call to Order: Mayor Pearson called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- A. Agenda Approval:** City Administrator Walbridge requested that Stacey Schultz’s library board resignation be added to the Consent Agenda and that the Lanesboro Public Utilities truck replacement be added under New Business. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve the requested additions; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Pearson requested additions to the agenda:

- Mayor Pearson entered a motion to add Mediation Update under Continued Business; Member Cullen seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- Mayor Pearson entered a motion to add Library Board Replacement under New Business; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- Mayor Pearson entered a motion to add Cost of Living under New Business. The motion died with lack of a second.
- Mayor Pearson entered a motion to add Healthcare under New Business. The motion died with lack of a second.

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

B. Public Comments:

- Peter Torkelson addressed the Lanesboro City Council regarding the drafted language of Resolution 2025-21 – Appointing a Member to the Lanesboro Public Library Board. Torkelson suggested the language could be revised to be more consistent with the newly adopted library board ordinance about appointments of library board members.
- Bonita Underbakke addressed the Lanesboro City Council concerning the Lanesboro Public Library allegedly having less independence under recently adopted ordinances related to the library board.
- Anna Loney addressed the Lanesboro City Council stating she was confused about the last library board meeting and the process about which library board members are appointed.
- Sarah Pieper addressed the Lanesboro City Council and shared her observations from other cities’ council meetings relating to meeting agendas, codes of conduct, and frequency of meetings. Pieper also questioned whether there is a city administrator group that acts as a resource between administrators.

C. Approval of Minutes:

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- a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting, February 3, 2025: Member Wade entered a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- b. Minutes of the Special Meeting, February 11, 2025: Member Wade entered a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Mayor Pearson stated she felt the drafted minutes did not include what she verbally expressed in the meeting and requested they be redone. Members asked the city administrator to review the recording and revise the minutes if warranted. Member Wade rescinded her motion. Member Bakke entered a motion to table approval until the meeting recording could be reviewed; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

D. Consent Agenda:

- Accounts Payable
- Resolution 2025-19 – Supporting Lanesboro Public Utilities for TH250 Funding
- Resolution 2025-20 – Accepting Donations for the Lanesboro Fire Department
- Buffalo Bill Days Gambling Permit
- Buffalo Bill Days Fireworks Permit
- Rhubarb Fest – Rhubarb Run
- Stacey Schultz – Lanesboro Public Library Board Resignation

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

Continued Business

- A. Consider Increase to the Fire Relief Association Pension:** Administrator Walbridge shared that he and the other trustees of the Lanesboro Firefighter's Relief Association met and recommended an increase to \$1,850 benefit level for the lump sum pension plan. All required documentation is now on file to justify the increase. Member Wade entered a motion to ratify the board of trustees' request; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. Comprehensive Plan – Review of Submitted Proposals:** Members asked questions of two of the top proposal submitters: MSA Planning and Design Studio and Bolton and Menk, Inc. The city council expressed the importance of staying within budget as well as a desire to not cut out any contents of each proposal's scope of work. Members also felt that both proposals were strong and would do a great job on the project. Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to accept the proposal from Bolton and Menk, Inc.; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- C. Lanesboro City Council Team Building:** Mayor Pearson shared that city council team building is not available through the League of Minnesota Cities. Administrator Walbridge stated he was not aware of any alternative opportunities at this time. Member Wade entered a motion to table the item indefinitely; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- D. Civil Defense Siren Safety Postings:** Administrator Walbridge stated he corresponded with Jason Harmening, Fillmore County Emergency Management, and Michael Peterson, Homeland Security and Emergency Management with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Peterson shared that the City is following best practices with the recommended testing schedule and appropriate activation during emergencies. Peterson recommended posting hazard signage for due diligence to warn the public that when the siren is activated, high decibel sound is emitted. Administrator Walbridge also stated that he can work with Harmening to enroll residents in CodeRed, a text alert notification system, for both siren tests and emergency siren activation. However, it was noted that because of the human/technology component in siren activation, the lead time on the text alert may vary. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve signage being added to the area around the city's civil defense siren; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- E. Mediation:** The League of Minnesota Cities is not able to provide mediation services between an elected official and a city staff member. Council members expressed that they did not want to incur cost for mediation. Member Albrecht-Benson questioned whether the Code of Conduct complaint needed to be revisited as she felt Mayor Pearson's behaviors of monopolizing the city administrator's time and

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taking actions that are presented as though they are city-driven efforts have continued. Member Albrecht-Benson provided an example of a recently published healthcare survey. Mayor Pearson stated that she felt she had not violated the Code of Conduct. Administrator Walbridge expressed ongoing concerns about the mayor's directives to add agenda items. Mayor Pearson stated she thinks it is her right to add agenda items as she wants and that it is the administrator's job to add them as part of his duty to prepare the agenda. Administrator Walbridge referred to City Ordinance 30.092 about the administrator bringing forth items the administrator feels necessary for the welfare of citizens and efficient city administration. Administrator Walbridge stated that if he omitted a proposed agenda item, Mayor Pearson may propose the item be added to the agenda at the city council meeting. Administrator Walbridge asked the city council if they were unhappy with current agenda practices. A majority of members indicated they were satisfied with the agenda preparation process. Member Wade entered a motion to rescind the directive for mediation; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

New Business

- A. Consider Resolution 2025-21 – Appointing a Member to the Lanesboro Public Library Board:** Member Bakke entered a motion to appoint the library board's recommended candidate, Anna Lane, to the Lanesboro Public Library Board; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Members noted the strong candidate pool that applied for the vacancy. Motion carried with all in favor. Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-21 with the amendment for the motion to read, "Whereas, the Mayor, with the consent of the City Council, shall appoint all members to the Library Board"; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. TH250 Project Update – Community Meeting:** Brian Malm, Bolton and Menk Engineer, presented an overview of the drafted Engagement and Communication Plan for the project. Malm stated the first open house meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2025 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Lanesboro City Hall. Malm shared a public engagement and assessment process timeline that has been drafted.
- C. Consider EDA Director Position:** Administrator Walbridge presented a proposal to have a shared EDA Director between the City of Lanesboro and City of Preston. The proposed position would be a 32-hour per week employee split between the two cities. Lanesboro would receive EDA staff time of approximately 9 hours per week. The job description was reviewed as well as budgetary figures. Mayor Pearson questioned the number of years of experience listed in the job description. Administrator Walbridge explained that ultimately the employee status falls under the City of Preston in the agreement between communities, so the description is under the City of Preston's overall discretion. Administrator Walbridge also noted that it may be difficult to recruit a candidate with five or more years of experience in rural Minnesota. Administrator Walbridge requested approval of the proposed job description and entering into an agreement supplied by the city attorney contingent upon the Lanesboro EDA Board's endorsement. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to approve the proposal contingent upon endorsement of the EDA Board; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- D. Review Fillmore County Ordinance No. 20230523 Hemp and Cannabis:** Administrator Walbridge explained that the City of Lanesboro needs to adopt the Fillmore County Hemp and Cannabis Ordinance or create and adopt a city ordinance. A city ordinance must be equally or more restrictive than Fillmore County's. Member Wade entered a motion to approve Resolution 2025-22 to support the Fillmore County Hemp and Cannabis Ordinance; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- E. Consider Modifying the Public Comment Period at City Council Meetings:** Mayor Pearson asked the council if the public comment period could be improved. Members discussed what the most valuable placement of the public comment on the meeting agendas would be. Members expressed that they would like to try a sign-up sheet and adhere to City of Resolution 2022-21 A Policy to Address Interested Citizens as well as review other cities' public comment practices. Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to table the discussion; Member Pearson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

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- F. Consider City Council Role in Community Events:** Mayor Pearson questioned whether the city council would want to be involved in community events in any way or whether the city council would want to start a new community event. Members were concerned about the potential to have city business discussions outside of a public meeting setting. Member Albrecht-Benson encouraged members to get involved in committees individually rather than involvement being associated with their roles as city council members. Mayor Pearson entered a motion to table the item indefinitely; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Pearson put the meeting into recess at 7:55 p.m.

Mayor Pearson called the meeting back to order at 7:57 p.m.

- G. Consider Lanesboro Public Utility Truck Replacement Request:** Administrator Walbridge shared the 1998 Ford Bucket Truck has 239,000 and 4,300 hours. It has had some mechanical issues and red tag safety issues in the past. Public Utilities Manager Jerod Wagner found a 2015 RAM that would be a good replacement for the current 1998 Ford. The 2015 RAM is on auction and bids close on March 5, 2025. Administrator Walbridge requested authorization of a maximum bid of \$35,000, to result in no more than \$40,000 of expense with buyer fees, in the auction. Administrator Walbridge also shared a Utility Vehicle Replacement Fund Balance of \$187,000. Member Albrecht -Benson entered a motion to authorize Utility Manager Wagner and Administrator Walbridge to spend a maximum amount of \$40,000 to be spent on replacement on the 1998 Ford bucket truck; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

- H. Library Board Vacancy:** With the acceptance of Stacey Schultz's resignation from the Lanesboro Public Library Board, members of the city council discussed the replacement process and timeline for the vacant library board seat. Member Pearson entered a motion to open an application period through March 11, 2025 at noon; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Administrator Walbridge stated the timeline would allow applications to be forwarded to the library board for its review of applications at the March 12 meeting. A recommendation for an appointment would be brought back to the city council at the April 7 meeting. Administrator Walbridge also noted that applicants from the previous round who were not appointed would be contacted about the additional vacancy. Their applications could be considered again for the most recent board vacancy. Motion carried with all in favor.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk