Lanesboro City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 5, 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 City Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. **Agenda Approval:** City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge requested that several items be added to the agenda:
   - Acceptance of two automated external defibrillators from Fillmore County (Consent Agenda)
   - Approval of a Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce permit application for lawful gambling (Consent Agenda)
   - Approval of a temporary on-sale liquor license application for the Lanesboro American Legion (Consent Agenda)
   - Acceptance of Proposal for Public Facility Energy Audit (New Business)
   - Consider Fire Department Equipment Quotes (New Business)
   - Consider Revocation of Interim Use Permit Authorization for 505 Parkway Avenue South (New Business)
   - Move the TH250 Road/Utility Project Update before the closed sessions

   A motion was made by Member Wade to approve the meeting agenda with the amendments; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

B. Public Comments:
   - Sarah Pieper commented on the number of feral and free roaming cats in the community. She estimated that 40 unspayed or un-neutered cats are roaming. She would like to see the City Council take action through a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program.
   - John Levell commented on the feral cats as well, stating that there are a great number of them. He stated that he has taken several to be neutered/spayed at his own expense.

C. Approval of Minutes:
   a. Minutes of Regular Meeting, September 8, 2026

   A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to approve the minutes as presented; Member Wade seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

D. Consent Agenda:
   A. Accounts Payable
   B. Resolution 2026-48 Accepting Donations for the Legion Lights Fund
   C. Resolution 2026-49 Approving City of Lanesboro Enrollment in PERA Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Pension Plan
   D. Resolution 2026-50 Accepting Donations for the Lanesboro Fire Department
   E. 2027 Liquor License Approval
   F. September Unaudited Fund Balances & 2026 YTD Budget
   G. Accept Two Automated External Defibrillators from Fillmore County
   H. Approve Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce Lawful Gambling Permit Application
   I. Approve Lanesboro American Legion Temporary On-Sale Liquor License

A motion was made by Member Wade to approve the Consent Agenda; Member Cullen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

TH250 Road/Utility Project Update:
Tony Rotchadl, Bolton & Menk, provided the City Council with an update on the TH250 Road/Utility Project. An informational open house for the public is scheduled for October 19. Information presented at the meeting will include a review of the project plan, which is 95% complete, project staging, the project timeline, and project phasing. Private utilities are in the process of being relocated, and the City Council can expect to know contract awardees in February.

Closed Session
Mayor Pearson closed the meeting at 6:31 p.m. The meeting was closed due to Attorney-Client privilege to discuss active or pending litigation pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05 Subd. 3(b). The purposes served by the attorney-client privilege outweigh those served by the Open Meeting Law and dictate the need for absolute confidentiality. The City Council discussed litigation strategies with legal counsel regarding a contract dispute with Sparrow Valley Properties LLC. The City Council discussed collection of the judgment.
The City Council opened the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Closed Session
Mayor Pearson closed the meeting at 6:52 p.m. The meeting was closed to evaluate the performance of City Administrator/City Clerk Mitchell Walbridge pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05, Subdivision 3(a). Mayor Pearson opened the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to adopt the draft performance evaluation; Mayor Pearson seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Pearson put the meeting in recess at 7:41 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 7:44 p.m.

Continued Business

A. **Consider Amendment to City of Lanesboro Compensation Schedule:** Mayor Pearson and Member Cullen prepared compensation data for City Administrator/City Clerk positions in greater Minnesota, regionally, and locally. The data showed that local comparisons with direct market competitors placed Lanesboro considerably below market for City Administrator compensation.
   A motion was made by Member Wade to add Grade 8 to the City's compensation schedule and have Grade 8 mirror the step schedule of the Utility Supervisor position; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.
   A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to move City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge's compensation to Grade 8, Step 6; Member Wade seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; Motion carried.

New Business

A. **Consider Southeast Service Cooperative Membership:** Administrator Walbridge stated he was visited by a representative of the Cooperative to review the scope of services and benefits available to members. The first year of membership is free as a trial, and membership after the first year is $335 per year.
   A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to adopt Resolution 2026-51 Authorizing Local Membership to the Cooperative; Member Cullen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.
B. **Discuss Concerns Regarding Feral and Free-Roaming Cats:** Mayor Pearson introduced discussion about the number of feral and free roaming cats present in the city. Mayor Pearson summarized the

nuisance effects and risks to public health and safety. Members discussed whether the Camp Companion Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program would be beneficial and cost-effective. Members expressed interest in other measures, such as code enforcement on nuisance properties and regulations regarding the feeding of free-roaming animals, that are worth investigating.

A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to table the item indefinitely; Member Wade seconded the motion. Member Albrecht-Benson commented that the topic could be brought back if additional helpful information becomes available. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

C. **Discuss Fire Department Policies and Procedures:** With input from Fire Department Chief Rob Wagner, members of the City Council discussed how to revise the department policies and procedures. A work group consisting of two appointed city council members and fire department will be formed. Mayor Pearson asked whether the City Administrator could assist by providing human resources expertise.

   A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to appoint Mayor Pearson and Member Wade to the workgroup; Member Cullen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

   The fire department will select its representatives at its next meeting. The work group will begin meeting in January, though Administrator Walbridge will share the League of Minnesota Cities Fire Department Management informational memo now, so participants have time to review the information.

D. **Consider Fire Department Equipment Quotes:** Fire Department Chief Wagner presented quotes for self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBAs). Chief Wagner explained that the current equipment is out of date and in need of replacement. Members discussed the quantity of SCBAs needed by the department and when to determine whether it is appropriate to call for mutual aid. Further documentation on procedures will be conducted by the future work group.

   Because the total cost exceeds $175,000, at least two quotes are required to be documented. Fire Chief Wagner stated that two quotes were obtained and will be submitted to the office of the clerk.

   A motion was made by Mayor Pearson to approve up to $165,650 for SCBA purchases and $9,650 for the air apparatus cascade system; Member Wade seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

E. **Consider Proposal for Public Facility Energy Audit:** Proposals were collected for an energy audit at the City's public buildings. The lowest responsible bidder was Earthwide LLC. Administrator Walbridge noted that the project is grant-funded through the Minnesota Department of Commerce's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.

   A motion was made by Mayor Pearson to approve the proposal; Member Wade seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; motion carried.

F. **Consider Revocation of Interim Use Permit Authorization:** Because Sparrow Valley Properties LLC did not comply with the conditions set forth in Resolution 2025-49, Administrator Walbridge recommended that the authorization to issue an interim use permit be revoked by the City Council.

   A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to revoke the authorization for issuance of an interim use permit to Sparrow Valley Properties LLC for the property at 505 Parkway Avenue South; Member Wade seconded the motion. During discussion, Mayor Pearson asked about lodging activity at the property and what options the City has for collection of lodging tax on the unauthorized activity. Administrator Walbridge commented that it would likely include additional litigation.

   All members voted in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Pearson adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk