

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Mayor Rowan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Stephanie Eder, Brenda Carlson, Sue Unterberger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin

OTHERS: Don Dufner, Duane Peterson, Steve Geislinger, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen Krone, City Clerk Deb Kramer

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Items on the Consent Agenda: January 8 regular and special meeting minutes, January Financial Report, Resolution 2026-7 Accepting Donations, delinquent water bills for shut off, 2026 Ambulance Service roster, staff PTO request, updated land use permit form, and updated chicken permit form.

Public Forum – None

Dufner reported to the council that the Legion Club approached the Wat-Kim-Valley VFW, requesting that they provide gambling. There would be pull tabs, e-tabs, and e-bingo. If the city approves, then the next step would be to the state board.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2026-8 APPROVING CHARITABLE GAMBLING AT LEGION CLUB, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The city has received five applications for pool employees in various positions, including one instructor that will need to be recertified. Council approved staff to begin advertising immediately for more applicants.

Clerk followed up on an ordinance violation that was still not in compliance. Council directed staff to send letter requesting removal of the violation and compliance with ordinance.

Clerk informed council that the EDA recommended approval of a Revolving Loan to Jean Reinert, in the amount of \$13,600, with an interest rate of 4.25% over an 8-year term.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE EDA RECOMMENDATION OF A REVOLVING LOAN TO JEAN REINERT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk informed council that Citizens Bank MN is offering Positive Pay, for \$25/month, to help prevent fraud. Carlson felt this was a great idea for the city.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE POSITIVE PAY AT CITIZENS BANK MN, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk followed up on a Small Cities Development Program Preliminary Proposal that the city had submitted. Watkins was not competitive enough to make the second round. If there is additional funding that opens up, the city may try again next year.

Clerk informed council that the tax abatement at Hilltop Health Care Center and Garden View was complete as of February 1 of 2026.

Clerk informed council that Forest Prairie Township approved the Renewal Addendum with the Clear Lake Subordinate Service District.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE 2026 RENEWAL ADDENDUM FOR CLEAR LAKE SUBORDINATE SERVICE DISTRICT, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk informed council that Ordinance 2026-1 was reversing the action of Ordinance 2024-4. This was a zoning change that did not end up happening, and the city attorney recommended adopting a new ordinance to clean up and close the matter.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE ORDINANCE 2026-1 AMENDING ORDINANCE 2024-4, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING MAP, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2026-9 ADOPTING A PETTY CASH FUND POLICY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2026-10 ALLOWING ACH BANK PAYMENTS AND ELECTRONIC WIRE TRANSFERS, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk followed up with the council regarding an increase in retirement funding per man year that was approved at the February 11, 2026 fire protection meeting.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE AN INCREASE IN THE FIRE RELIEF RETIREMENT FUND FROM \$2400 TO \$2650 PER MAN YEAR, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Another item approved at the fire protection meeting was moving from a unit to a valuation basis for fire protection costs. Carlson asked the Clerk how long it would take to make that change. Clerk noted that Stearns County will be easier, as the information is accessible directly from their website. Meeker County will take a little more time, as they are still mostly paper based, but it should not be too difficult.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE WATKINS LIONS CLUB ON-SALE TEMPORARY LIQUOR LICENSE REQUEST FOR APRIL 11 EVENT AT VILLAGE HALL, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE WATKINS LIONS CLUB ON-SALE TEMPORARY LIQUOR LICENSE REQUEST FOR JULY 11-12 EVENT AT MCCARTHY PARK, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Deputy Clerk followed up with council on the pay equity report that was submitted to the state after approval at the January meeting. The city received a notice of non-compliance after analysis by the state, with instructions on how to come into compliance. A new report with the state's recommendations was submitted for preliminary review and passed initial checks.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE INCREASE OF \$2.75 FOR DEPUTY CLERK AND \$2.18 FOR CLERK-TREASURER TO BRING CITY INTO COMPLIANCE, EFFECTIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT PAY PERIOD, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk informed council that she will begin working part time in May, to start using banked PTO hours.

Geislinger reviewed a quote for a transfer pump at the ponds to replace one that had failed. The ponds are in good shape now, but we will need new pump for the spring. Replacement pump should last 20-25 years.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF TRANSFER PUMP FROM QUALITY FLOW FOR \$38,996, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger also showed council a quote for a new metal detector. They use this for finding curb stops, manholes, and other things. The one public works is using now is old and has been patched together for some time.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF METAL DETECTOR FROM UTILITY LOGIC FOR \$1,175 PLUS \$45 SHIPPING AND HANDLING, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS AS PRESENTED, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Next regular meeting is Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Submitted by:

Sarah Jacobsen Krone, Deputy Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan, Mayor