

APPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Acting Mayor Tootz Tschumperlin, Stephanie Eder, Brenda Carlson, Sue Unterberger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Rowan

OTHER: Sergeant Ryan Schutz, Deputy Sandstrom, Kevin Holtz, Jody Bauer, Bonnie Holthaus, Heidi Donnay, Duane Peterson, 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: December 11 regular meeting minutes, December Financial Report, Resolution 2026-1 Accepting Donations, Resolution 2026-2 Approving Transfer of Funds, Resolution 2026-3 Approving Payment of Certain Monthly Bills, and delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – None

Carlson asked if ambulance billing had improved since last quarter. Bauer responded that there is a significant amount in accounts receivable, mostly waiting for insurance to process. She has been reviewing all the runs this quarter and making sure proper paperwork is turned in.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE AMBULANCE REPORTS, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Bauer also noted that 2026 retirement funding requires a \$9,691.05 transfer from ambulance operations to the relief fund.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO TRANSFER \$9,691.05 FROM AMBULANCE OPERATIONS TO RELIEF FUND FOR 2026 RETIREMENT FUNDING, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

There are 8 members who have reached 15 years of service and are eligible for \$1,300.00 each, for a total of \$10,400.00 from the relief association.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO PAY OUT \$10,400.00 IN 15-YEAR SERVICE PAYOUTS, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Kevin Holtz spoke to the council regarding a situation with his neighbor. He petitioned to bring his property into the city in 1995 and connected to water and sewer service. Since that time, the city has added Clear Lake sewer, and he is looking at detaching his property and doing something similar for water/sewer. Tschumperlin asked if Holtz thought this would stop the complaining, and he replied that no, it wouldn't. The neighbor has complained about his chickens. Unterberger noted that the city

allows up to 8 hens, and Holtz stated that he currently has 15 chickens. He is planning on sorting them to get down to the maximum allowed, but hasn't had time yet. Holtz stated he also has an issue with the number of outbuildings allowed. Council noted that he is allowed to have two accessory buildings under the current ordinance, and Clerk added that there is a maximum of 1,700 sq. ft. on the combined accessory buildings. Holtz stated that he currently has three outbuildings, and would like to add another building. He stated that he had looked at some other cities' ordinances that allowed varying maximums based on lot size. The Clerk explained that Holtz could apply to amend the text of ordinance, come up with language to propose to the board, and go through the process for a public hearing. Council asked Holtz to include the information he found from other cities with his application, if he chose to complete one, and recommended that as a first step. Clerk informed Holtz that the next planning commission meeting would be February 4.

Deputy Sandstrom noted there have been some calls coming from the Watkins House due to some resident issues. He also discussed the brush site, and the need for signage indicating that no trespassing is allowed after hours of operation.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE THE SHERIFF'S REPORT, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Wages for 2026 pool staff were discussed, along with tentative opening dates. Council directed staff to send letters to former staff members asking those interested in working in 2026 to return applications to the city.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-4, RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2026 APPOINTMENTS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-5, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE STAMPS FOR MAYOR AND ACTING MAYOR, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY EDER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-6, RESOLUTION MAKING APPOINTMENTS FOR AUTHORIZED SIGNERS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk noted that the annual Fire Protection meeting would be held at 7:00 p.m. on February 11 at the Fire Hall.

MOTION BY EDER TO ALLOW FOREST PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP TO USE CITY HALL FOR TOWNSHIP ELECTIONS MARCH 11, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY EDER TO APPROVE THE PAY EQUITY REPORT DATA, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Hiring an administrative position in 2026 was discussed. Staff will follow up next month with more information.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE WATKINS LIONS CLUB ON-SALE TEMPORARY LIQUOR LICENSE REQUEST FOR MARCH 7-8 EVENT AT VILLAGE HALL, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Deputy Clerk followed up with council on Economic Transformation learning cohort that was discussed at the December 2025 meeting.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE DEPUTY CLERK TO REGISTER FOR THE UMN EXTENSION COHORT ON ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Eder noted that McCarthy Park lights should be taken down by January 15. Unterberger asked if enough money in donations came in to pay for the lights. Eder replied that they received quite a few donations, and the cost was paid from the park & rec fund, which the Watkins Lions Club supports with contributions.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE STAFF PTO REQUEST, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk informed council that Hilltop Nursing Home was looking at filing for non-profit status in 2026. The assisted living portion would potentially remain for-profit. There is a possibility that they would be open to a PILOT [payment in lieu of tax] agreement. City will need to put together some costs.

Public Works staff will get quote on brush site signage. Geislinger requested approval for himself and Keith Peters to attend MN Rural Water Association's annual conference March 3-5 at St. Cloud. They earn credits needed to keep up their water and wastewater licenses by attending, and Peters will be testing for his Water Class C certification. Cost is \$350.00 each.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE REQUEST TO ATTEND THE RURAL WATER CONFERENCE, 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, February 12 at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by:

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Sarah Jacobsen Krone, Deputy Clerk

ATTEST:

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Chris Rowan, Mayor