



OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Sustainability, Energy & Environment Committee
DATE/TIME: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Maple Room
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Jean Abreu (C) Daniel Zinsmeister
Carol Lukens Britnie Remer
Jesse Kearns Lauren Leitner
Christine Daniels

1 Call to order by the presiding officer.

2 Public comment on agenda items and reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.

3 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).

Approval of the November 6, 2025, meeting minutes.

4 Discussion.

a. Work plan discussion

5 Adjournment.

Jean Abreu, Chair

**NOTICE POSTED AT CITY HALL (407 GRANT STREET) AND
TRANSMITTED TO THE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED NEWSPAPER**

DATE: December 29, 2025

TIME: 4:00PM

POSTED BY: Michelle Van Krey

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6622 or ADAServices@ci.wausau.wi.us to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.



City of Wausau
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wausauwi.gov



MINUTES

November 6, 2025

Members Present: Jean Abreu (C), Alder Carol Lukens, Christine Daniels, Jesse Kearns, Britnie Remer, Daniel Zinsmeister, and Lauren Leitner

Others Present: Susan Haug, Mayor Doug Diny, and Carrie Edmondson

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Abreu called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

3. Approval of the October 2, 2025, meeting minutes

Jesse/Dan motion/second to approve the minutes – approved 6-0.

4. Susan Haug – Bird City presentation

Susan Haug, coordinator of the City’s Bird City application, provided an overview of the application. She provided more information about ways the City could improve the application.

The Committee decided that one of two members would have continued conversation with Susan and bring potential ideas back to SEEC.

Alder Carol Lukens arrived.

5. Discussion and Possible Action: Work Plan reports

- Sustainability Manager – Carrie
 - 2025 Year in Review/Work Plan update
 - The City has been awarded SolSmart Silver designation by the SolSmart team.
 - There were no Wausau Sustainability Awards received by the October 19 deadline. This item will be put on the agenda again in February and there was discussion about reaching out to individual businesses directly and posting a physical flyer at like-minded businesses and/or the Farmers Market.
 - An EPA grant was submitted for the City solar array project.
- Media and Public Education –
 - Future radio spots -
 - November – Year in Review (Jesse)
 - December – Salt (Carol)

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- January – Backyard Gardening Class
 - Newsletter deadlines - 2026
 - 3/6/26 – spring newsletter
 - 6/5/26 – summer newsletter
 - 9/11/26 – fall newsletter
 - WLGCC – Equinox Creative Communications materials are available to share with group members for educational/marketing needs.
- Elected Official Education – Jesse
 - SEEC plans to provide more Common Council education/outreach once the 2026 Work Plan is established.
 - Working w/Departments
 - This item is completed and is included in the packet.
 - Policy and framework to guide decisions, etc.
 - Carrie reviewed a Five-Year Climate Action Work Plan template from the Great Plains Institute. A planning process will be brought forward as part of the Work Plan discussion.
 - Farmers Market and Food Stop
 - Carrie and Jean met with Janell and she provided a proposed class structure, format, and location. The group noted that the Marathon County Public Library (MCPL) would be provide the best location. The overarching framing would be sustainability benefits to growing your own food locally. Benefits include reduced emissions from transporting food, reduced packaging, and organic methods. Jean noted that seed/plant donations would be a good addition to the program.

Britnie Remer and Christine Daniels left the meeting.

- Jean noted that we may want to use media to help with marketing (City Pages, Wausau Pilot and Review) and post flyers at Downtown Grocery, MCPL, Neighbor’s Place. A media protocol will be added to the February agenda.

6. Next meeting date: January 2026 TBD

Mary Kluz will be coordinating the Work Plan in January. Carrie will poll the group for availability.

Lauren Leitner left the meeting.

7. Adjourn

Jesse/Dan motion/second - approved 4-0. Adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) Year in Review 2025

SEEC Members: Jean Abreu (Chair), Alder Carol Lukens, Christine Daniels, Jesse Kearns, Britnie Remer, Daniel Zinsmeister, and Lauren Leitner

SEEC acts as an advisory body to the Common Council in the development of policies, programs and decisions that affect the relationship between the City and the environment. Enabling ordinance [here](#).

On March 14, 2023, the Common Council adopted a resolution supporting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy security (attached). With this, the City committed to the following:

- Determine the level of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in City government operations.
- Develop a municipal energy plan with the goal of moving City government operations to a more secure, and 100% clean energy by 2050.
- Provide resources and information to residents and businesses to support them in the transition to a cleaner energy future.
- Create cost savings through efficiency upgrades and clean energy technologies that will reduce the burden of City government operations on the tax levy.

The City is a member of the [Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition \(WLGCC\)](#) and a [Green Tier Legacy Community](#) through WDNR.

A Work Plan was completed in November of 2024, which helped to direct goals and objectives through 2025.

The following overarching goals were identified:

Sustainability Manager

- 1) SolSmart designation is being pursued.
- 2) Dedicated sustainability staff position is being pursued.
- 3) The Wausau Sustainability Awards program was reformatted and relaunched.

Public Educations through media campaign and promotion of SEEC

- 1) A Committee logo was adopted.
- 2) Seasonal initiatives and branding were established and promoted.
- 3) Monthly radio interviews conducted.

- 4) Quarterly submission in the Wausau Works for You newsletter.

Regular education with Common Council

- 1) A Common Council update was given.
- 2) A petition was organized to support the City solar array.
- 3) A support letter was drafted and adopted in support of the City solar array.
- 4) SEEC presented the support letter and petition before the Wausau Water Works Commission and Common Council.

Working with City Departments (advocating for them and supporting their initiatives)

- 1) Department interviews completed and results attached.

Policy and framework to guide decisions and elevate sustainability goals

- 1) SEEC is in discussion about the need for either a climate action plan, sustainability plan, or resilience plan or a combination of these. Funding opportunities are being explored.

Farmers Market/Food Stop

- 1) SEEC is in discussion with UW Extension who will be offering a backyard gardening course in early spring with sustainability benefits being emphasized including:
 - Reducing GHG emissions from transportation
 - Supporting local farmland preservation
 - Minimizing food waste
 - Reducing packaging

The Committee is planning a new work plan for January 2026 to re-establish overarching goals and priorities.

RESOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Supporting Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Security.

Committee Action: Approved 5-0

Fiscal Impact: Undetermined

File Number: 23-0308

Date Introduced: March 14, 2023

WHEREAS, the city’s Sustainability, Energy and Environment Committee (SEEC) was created to act as an advisory body to the Common Council in the development of policies, programs, and decisions that affect the relationship between the City and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the city of Wausau desires to be among the communities leading on critical environmental and societal issues, having approved a Resolution in support of environmental justice; and

WHEREAS, the city of Wausau has embraced Energy Independence, evidenced by the passing of an energy independence resolution in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the City declared itself an eco-municipality in 2009, and among the guidelines for sustainable practices are reducing dependence upon fossil fuels and reducing dependence upon harmful chemicals and other manufactured substances that can accumulate in nature; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) shows continued warming, increases in rain and snow, and more frequent extreme rainfall events; and,

WHEREAS, in 2020, the city of Wausau joined other communities in leading a healthier future as a Green Tier Legacy Community through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; and,

WHEREAS, the Green Tier Legacy Community scorecard encourages member communities to commit to achieving a science-based, community-wide Green House Gas reduction goal, and

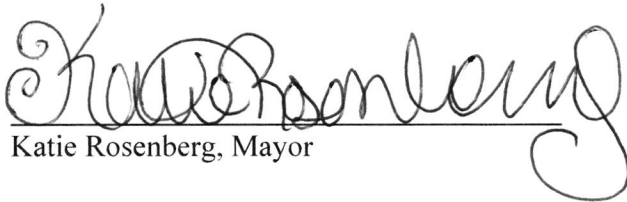
WHEREAS, The Federal legislation known the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, have created historic opportunities for communities and individuals to transition to renewable energy sources and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and

WHEREAS, Future availability and price of fossil fuels for energy production may be volatile due to circumstances beyond the control of the City of Wausau.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the city commits to...

- Determine the level of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in City government operations
- Develop a municipal energy plan with the goal of moving City government operations to a more secure, and 100% clean energy by 2050
- Provide resources and information to residents and businesses to support them in the transition to a cleaner energy future.
- Create cost savings through efficiency upgrades and clean energy technologies that will reduce the burden of City government operations on the tax levy.

Approved:



Katie Rosenberg, Mayor

Department Director Meetings with SEEC

Jamie Polley, Parks Director

Eric Lindman, DPW/Utility Director

Randy Fifrlick, Development Director

Arran Hersey, Transit Director

Matt Barnes, Police Chief

Jeremy Kopp, Fire Chief

From: Sustainability Committee
Re: Survey on GHG Challenges and Opportunities

Questions:

- At your professional conferences or through continuing education, is there any discussion/preparation in your industry due to climate change?
 - *Electric equipment instead of gas. Testing mowers and smaller equipment. Field painter is electric and saving a lot of \$. Looking at areas to not mow. Trail lighting is LED. Conf coursework on sustainable communities.*

Additional Notes:

- Would like to replace Ice Bldg in future. Could explore for green mechanicals and energy.
- Adapting to making snow. Water use and sewer.
- Have installed rain sensors, actuators on decorative fountains.
- Hanging baskets are self-watering. Napa, CA replaced baskets with community art. Baskets could be a future budget cut.
- Use a lot of natural sprays. Limit use of Round Up.
- No policy in place on any kind of chemical use.
- Newsletter items: Goats. Goat-a-palooza. Types of sprays they do use.
- Dept grows all plants in greenhouse. Extras are given away for free.
- Tree replanting to replace Ash is done carefully and considered. Leaf compost site in Parks wooded areas potential.
- Need help knowing what the threshold for change over with regards to gas engine vs electric.
- Lack of staffing to maintain new infrastructure.
- Athletic Park field turf infill is **olive pits** not crushed rubber.
- Two parking lots. Riverside and Sylvan. Really bad shape. Alternatives to asphalt?
- Could we add options to code that could be alternatives to asphalt on parking lots and driveways?
- (Stormwater credit to homeowner/developer when using permeable paver?)
 - Andy's notes: found out that permeable pavers require yearly maintenance in order to perform well. Gaps fill up with sediment. Really not a great alternative.
- Irrigate from well. Dig well within City.
- Bring Jamie in when reviewing development landscaping in ROW.

SEEC & Directors Meeting - Sept 24

DPW

Eric, Allen, Solomon, Dustin

Winter weather has been variable. Ice storms are more expensive. Has new equipment to not use salt. Use less salt/sand...add on costs.

EV – technicians must be certified and new hazards. Impacts the design of buildings. Grid to DPW not adequate.

Charging stations located on private sites.

Solomon – propane for light - medium duty vehicles. Local company would install fueling stations on DPW site. Propane fuel is steady price. Hybrid police were supply constrained. Parking are hybrids. EV again comes around to maintenance and charging.

Foundry – wanted 24 fast charging WPS was not able to supply enough power. Unknown capacity to add more, and what demand is.

Solar Array – makes sense because of the payback. Wastewater stores methane for electric turbines and future biosolids dryer.

Cmte could be a cheerleader for DPW. Need a full list of all good city projects to promote.

Policy on building standards? Yes. Keep it broad.

Policy on development that charging stations should be included for the private sector to do.

Tracking salt use. Not increasing budget is a win.

Eric is curious about charging stations. City wants to minimize things to maintain which makes a good

Advantage is City has electrical department.

Training needed to handle EV and new training.

\$ for upfront capital costs. Need lifecycle analysis.

Solar – approve budget – Design in 2025 with construction in 2026.

Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) Director Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 20th 9:00 a.m.

Randy Ffirick, Development Director

At your professional conferences or through continuing education, is there any discussion/preparation in your industry due to climate change?

- Supply chain issues/business retention has come up. We are somewhat lucky that Wisconsin is a climate haven and from a tourism standpoint this may allow us to attract more visitors.

What challenges do you foresee to providing City services due to changes in our environment/climate/extreme weather?

- Emergency preparedness is something that the City continues to strive to address. Alternative energy sources such as solar and geothermal create more independence. The City has invested significantly with the integration of PFAS removal systems. The City is in the best position to remediate brownfield sites (v. the private sector that often doesn't have the time or resources to handle brownfield clean-up). However, this is costly and time intensive and it is sometimes difficult to generate City support for these complicated projects.
- Drinking water treatment facility solar array project has stalled – likely due to funding and prioritization.
- Large scale solar array projects may not always be highest and best use of the land. Rooftop solar can maximize development opportunities.

Are there other actions, not specifically energy-related, that you'd like to pursue that fall under sustainability?

- Land use and transportation planning (e.g. bringing large scale multi-family housing to downtown) reduce automobile use and create integration between live/work/play, this maximizes efficiencies in multiple ways.
- Brownfield site clean-up continues to be a high concern. WDNR is slow to work with, site clean-up is expensive and time intensive, and it is often difficult to get buy-in for expensive projects that have a long time horizon.
- Specifically with food systems planning, he mentioned that UW-Extension may be a good partner. We also discussed the potential with a dedicated sustainability staff person and an overarching sustainability plan. Point source pollution reduction continues to be the most effective way to reduce phosphorus from farm fields.

Is there a specific action that SEEC could advocate for?

- Support for brownfield site clean-up (to get properties back on the tax rolls).

Economic drivers include – residential infill, technology based businesses, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) Director Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 20th 10:00 a.m.

Arran Hersey, Transit Director

At your professional conferences or through continuing education, is there any discussion/preparation in your industry due to climate change?

- Emissions and alternative fuel vehicles including hybrid, electric, and hydrogen fuel cell (FCEB) buses. Electric buses do not hold charge well in a cold climate. Hydrogen seems to have the most promise at this time and is being used more widely in Europe. The City of Las Vegas just purchased two for \$3 million. A regular diesel gas bus costs about 620k. Therefore, costs would need to come down to make this a reality for Wausau. He noted there are two plants (one in Madison and one in Milwaukee) that are working to refine the hydrogen fuel technology. Jay mentioned that Madison has a solar project powering hydrogen buses, more information [here](#).
- He is currently replacing ten 2009-2011 diesel buses with new diesel buses. Metro Ride has 26 diesel fuel buses and 4 paratransit buses.
- He is looking into a rideshare model that would travel to some of the larger employers in the area.
- Additionally Metro Ride is undergoing a feasibility study to determine if the current facility or an alternative location can best meet demand. He has concern that the current facility may not well accommodate future alternative fuel vehicle fueling/servicing needs. The existing building is also located within the 100 year floodplain which becomes more costly.

What challenges do you foresee to providing City services due to changes in our environment/climate/extreme weather?

- With more extreme cold or hot temperatures, the concern is to prevent people from waiting outdoors and get them into buses. This creates more idling time.

What is your interest in lowering the energy demand or using alternative energy in your department?

- It would be advantageous in a new facility to integrate solar. This could be something that the SEEC could express support for.

Are there other actions, not specifically energy-related, that you'd like to pursue that fall under sustainability?

- Continuing to look at existing routes and ensure that they are providing the best service and contain the highest ridership.
- Promotion to get people to use public transportation/ride the bus. A more forward facing phone app would help with accessibility. Google Maps does have a transit option when mapping your route. A PSA explaining how to use this could be beneficial.

- This may include expanding service lines or providing service on weekends.
- Have also considering providing bus passes to those that have financial need.

Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) Director Meeting Notes

Wednesday, June 11th 2:00 p.m.

Matt Barnes, Police Chief and Melinda Pauls, Patrol Captain

At your professional conferences or through continuing education, is there any discussion/preparation in your industry due to climate change?

- No

What challenges do you foresee to providing City services due to changes in our environment/climate/extreme weather?

- Not specifically related to environment/extreme weather, but Chief Barnes talked about how the PD is addressing the unhoused.
- There is a need for transportation services for the public including the unhoused and there is a loss of federal funding for buses. EV buses are not practical in Wisconsin winters and this is sometimes required to receive funding.
- As of 6/1/2025, the Wausau PD began operation of the year-round homeless shelter at First United Methodist Church in Wausau. Ideally, he would like to see this transition to private or non-profit sector ownership with a funding transition likely.
 - There are four transitional housing options in Wausau, Bridge Street Mission, The Gospel TLC, The Women's Community, and The Hagar House. STP housing for men exiting prison exist but no parallel program exists for women. The Salvation Army can accommodate up to three families.
- The homeless encampments have been broken up, but he felt the only way he could break these up is if people were told they had somewhere else to go.

Are there other actions, not specifically energy-related, that you'd like to pursue that fall under sustainability?

- PD has owned hybrid vehicles (he felt the fuel savings was likely a wash with the increased vehicle cost) and he is open to other options. He does not feel that electric vehicles would provide the reliability that PD needs.
- Camera/data storage expenses have increased over the past several years.
- They did look at incorporating green initiatives into their evidence storage building that was constructed in the industrial park 6-7 years ago, but it did not cost out.
- He thought some smaller EV options could be done in the future such as electric bikes and UTVs.

Is there a specific action that SEEC could advocate for?

- He felt that it would be good for SEEC to review projects that are being considered under the CIP process.
- He thought the SEEC could advocate for the unhoused population and the need for a shelter that operates and is funded in a sustainable manner by recognizing the solution as a five-year financial commitment to achieve financial independence.

- Policy that addresses the unhoused being brought into the City of Wausau because of the vast services available here.
- Looking ahead with planning and perhaps capital funding foresight which will address aging buildings (PD building has AC/boiler that had 20 year lifespan and now after 25 years are in need of replacement).

Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) Director Meeting Notes

Wednesday, June 25th 2:00 p.m.

Jeremy Kopp, Fire Chief

He noted that process is a significant factor with City government, learning to go through committee, City Council etc. He noted that it would be beneficial for the SEEC to identify which committee would make the most sense for their goals and initiatives.

At your professional conferences or through continuing education, is there any discussion/preparation in your industry due to climate change?

- No
- Note – the positions within the department have changed substantially over the past couple decades now include dive team rescue, HAZMAT, paramedic, etc.

What challenges do you foresee to providing City services due to changes in our environment/climate/extreme weather?

- Fire vehicles need to keep running in all weather due to the instruments and essential equipment that must stay charged.
- The use of foam has been substantially reduced over the past several years.
- PFAS free gear that still meets NFP standards has been purchased, and firefighters have a second set as laundering is quite extensive.

Are there other actions, not specifically energy-related, that you'd like to pursue that fall under sustainability?

- He has recently worked to fill a high number of vacancies; partnership has been essential to this, and they have partnered with NTC to help meet this need in addition to one on one training opportunities.
- He believes strategic planning and succession planning are both essential and lead to increased resiliency.
- A new facility is needed (and would hopefully be much more energy efficient).
- One recent success is the creation of a community care paramedic position. This has significantly reduced the number of 911 calls, as this individual works directly with the highest users of 911. This is a partnership between Fire Department/Aspirus/Community Foundation. 911 calls from these users have gone down 66%! Many other communities want to model after this.

Is there a specific action that SEEC could advocate for?

- CIP planning process is changing to a five year process which is a good way to look at capital goals over time.
- Much of the equipment is quite expensive, for example five AED machines will be needed in the next five years at \$160,000 per year.
- New facility is top priority that SEEC could advocate for (joint-memo?)

We also got an awesome tour!