



**OFFICIAL MINUTES**  
REGULAR MEETING

**MEETING:** Police & Fire Commission  
**DATE/TIME:** Monday, January 26, 2026 at 7:30 AM  
**LOCATION:** Public Safety Building, 515 Grand Ave  
Community Room

**MEMBERS:**  
Kathy Strasser      Thomas Garver  
Cheryl Bahr        Vylius Lyskys  
Katie Rosenberg

Members Present: Katie Rosenberg, Vylius Leskys, Kathy Strasser  
Members Not Present: Thomas Garver, Cheryl Bahr  
Members Excused:  
Present 3, Not Present 2, Excused 0

Noting the presence of a quorum, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 07:31 AM.

**1 Call to order by the presiding officer.**

Commission President Strasser invited public comment. Citizen Mary Kluz emphasized the importance of upholding Wausau's core values in light of current national events. She requested that command staff review Constitutional and Departmental expectations with their personnel as a reminder to ensure they continue to honor the oath taken upon being sworn into the Department. She expressed her appreciation to the PFC Commissioners and command staff present for the vital work they perform each day for the community.

**Roll Call**

Roll Call indicated 3 members present.  
Members Present - Katie Rosenberg, Vylius Leskys, Kathy Strasser  
Members Absent - Thomas Garver, Cheryl Bahr  
Members Excused -  
Present 3, Absent 2, Excused 0

**2 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).**

Minutes of December 15, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Rosenberg to approve minutes from December 15, 2025 meeting, second by Commissioner Leskys.  
Motion carried 3-0.

**3 Closed Session.**

Pursuant to Section 19.85(1)(c) of the Wisconsin State Statutes considering employment of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility for the purpose of interviewing one candidate for promotion to Lieutenant with Wausau Fire Department.

Motion by Commissioner Rosenberg to go into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c) for the purpose of interviewing 1 candidate for promotion to Lieutenant with the Wausau Fire Department, second by Commissioner Leskys.  
Motion carried 3-0.

***The Police & Fire Commission convened into Closed Session at 7:35 AM***

**4 Open Session.**

Reconvene into Open Session for purpose of potential action upon consideration of

## Closed Session Items.

Motion by Commissioner Rosenberg to reconvene meeting into Open Session, second by Commissioner Leskys.  
Motion carried 3-0.

### ***The Police & Fire Commission reconvene into Open Session at 7:59 AM***

Motion by Commissioner Leskys to promote Jared Koss to Lieutenant with the Wausau Fire Department, second by Commissioner Rosenberg.  
Motion carried 3-0.

## **5 Presentations.**

### **I. Monthly Police Department Operations Update:**

- Presentation of current Police Department activities and 4th quarter report.

Deputy Chief Baeten began by inviting Captain Pauls to present the 4th quarter report. Captain Pauls highlighted key statistics from the report and addressed questions regarding how the data was compiled and the breakdown of information within the report.

Regarding the 4th Quarter report. Captain Pauls spoke on the influx of the homeless population. She stated the influx may be related to the addition of the Downtown Officers and how they are encouraging the unhoused to utilize the shelters where they may have not been before. Deputy Chief Baeten noted the growing number of medically complex individuals within the homeless population, which shelters are not equipped to handle. He stated that the city and local shelters are working together to connect these individuals with additional resources to help with their medical needs. The 4th Quarter Report also showed an increase in cases assigned to the Detective Bureau. Captain Pauls and Deputy Chief Baeten explained that as the number of social media platforms grow, so do the opportunities for cybercrime. They also highlighted the value of having School Resource Officers partnered with K9 units, noting that this creates an environment that fosters safe and trusting relationships between students and law enforcement early on. As a result, more crimes are being reported by students than in the past.

Captain Pauls spoke on how the community is responding to law enforcement in light of recent national news involving other communities. She noted how fortunate the department is to have a community that consistently supports its law enforcement officers. She added that command staff regularly engages in conversations with officers and provides support regarding national events, focusing on how to move forward while maintaining consistent integrity.

Captain Pauls concluded by discussing the significant number of challenging calls their young officers have handled over the past few months and the toll these calls take—not only on the newer officers but also on the veteran officers who try to shield them from such experiences. She emphasized the importance of peer support and regular check-ins to encourage officers to utilize available mental health resources and maintain overall well-being.

### **II. Monthly Fire Department Operations Update:**

- Presentation of current Fire Department activities and Station 2 update.

Chief Kopp began by sharing that the Fire Department is fully staffed for the first time in three years, expressing excitement about this milestone. He emphasized the significant benefits to both the department and the community when all positions are filled.

Chief Kopp addressed the upcoming referendum, stating that he will remain actively engaged in the community to promote understanding. His efforts will include podcasts, news stories, printed

materials, and other outreach initiatives.

Regarding the update at Station 2, Chief Kopp reported that the mezzanine has been successfully converted into office space for the Fire Prevention Bureau. As of the beginning of the year, the two inspectors and the Fire Prevention Division Chief have officially transitioned from Central Station to Station 2, improving operational efficiency and resource allocation.

Chief Kopp concluded by reporting that in 2025, the Fire Department responded to over 7,200 calls, with an additional 72 calls requiring mutual aid from outside agencies. His goal moving forward is to fully staff a fourth ambulance unit, which would help reduce the need for mutual aid from neighboring departments.

## 6 Adjournment.

Next Meeting: February 23, 2026

Motion by Commissioner Rosenberg to adjourn meeting, second by Commissioner Leskys.  
Motion carried 3-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 08:32 AM.

The recording of this meeting may be viewed on  
YouTube [@CityofWausauMeetings](#)



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