



OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Sustainability, Energy & Environment Committee
DATE/TIME: Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – **Council Chambers**
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

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

AMENDED

1 Call to order by the presiding officer.

2 Public comment.

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

Consideration of the January 7, 2026, meeting minutes.

4 Discussion.

a. Work Plan Summary

5 Discussion and possible action.

a. Sustainability Plan

- Overview of Five-Year Wausau Climate Action Plan and review of Introduction Section

b. Engagement

- Wausau Sustainability Award - review application submittal
- Future radio spots -
 - February - UW Backyard Gardening Class (Janel/Carrie)
 - March - Wausau Sustainability Award
 - April
- Newsletter deadlines - 2026
 - 3/6/26 - spring newsletter
 - 6/5/26 - summer newsletter
 - 9/11/26 - fall newsletter

c. Community Initiatives

- UW Extension spring backyard gardening class - format and location determined, discussion of marketing plan

6 Items for future agendas.

7 Next meeting date.

- a. Thursday, March 5, 5:00 p.m.**

8 Adjournment.

Jean Abreu, Chair

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

DATE: February 2, 2026

TIME: 12:30pm

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@wausauwi.gov 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
(715) 261-6500 | clerk@wausauwi.gov
wausauwi.gov



MINUTES

January 7, 2026

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

Others Present: Michael Thomasgard 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. Call to Order

Chair Abreu called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Michael Thomasgard provided public comment, requesting consideration of less mowing of parks and schools, changes to leaf pick-up, and more attention focused on pollution reduction and climate concerns.

3. Consideration of the November 6, 2025, meeting minutes

Britnie/Jesse motion/second to approve the minutes – approved 7-0.

4. Discussion

a. Work plan discussion

SEEC discussed wins, challenges and overarching priority focus areas for the coming year. Carrie will synthesize these ideas and bring a summary to the February meeting.

Christine and Britnie left the meeting.

5. Adjournment

Carol/Jesse motion/second – approved 5-0. Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

SEEC Work Plan Summary

Sustainability Plan

- a. Framework
 - Natural step framework
 - City Council adoption
- b. Policies
 - Green infrastructure
 - Native gardens on City property
 - Replace lawn with native plantings
 - Rain garden incentives
 - More green infrastructure on new builds
 - Leaf policy
 - Toxic chemical/pesticide policy for City
 - Bird-friendly policies for buildings/windows
 - City buildings – energy efficiency ratings
 - City energy audit
 - Advocate for sustainability position
- c. Strategies
 - Charge Smart (contingent upon funding)
 - Revisit/reimagine solar projects

Engagement

- a. Youth Engagement
 - Create a pipeline for young adults to return to/stay in Wausau for green jobs
 - Engage youth in sustainability initiatives
 - SEEC youth member
 - Explore small things we can do to make a big difference (quick wins)
- b. Community Engagement
 - Bi-monthly Council engagement
 - Explore new means of community engagement (turn radio interviews into Wausau Pilot and Review articles)
 - Keep monthly radio interview
 - Submit content for the Wausau Works for You newsletter
 - Hold more community events
 - Build awareness/education with art
 - Incorporate creativity and art
 - Education/encourage home energy audits
 - Department heads (Part 2) ideas to action/annual check-in
 - Wausau Sustainability Awards
- c. Business Engagement
 - Connect sustainability representatives from community businesses

- d. Learn about how SEEC can help area businesses further their initiatives

Community Initiatives

- a. Environmental Justice
 - Extend scope to include unhoused (all persons) as a part of the environment
 - Assist City with brownfield redevelopment grant support
- b. Plastics Reduction
 - City to enact its own policy/model for the community
 - Commitment from local businesses to go plastic free (Inspired by plastic free MKE) – Who are our partners?
- c. UW Extension Backyard Gardening class



STAFF MEMO

To: Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee

Prepared By: Carrie Edmondson, AICP
Assistant City Planner

Date: February 5, 2026

City of Wausau Climate Action Work Plan

Staff has begun development of the City of Wausau Climate Action Work Plan 2026-2031. As various draft sections of the plan are developed, they will be included in the packet and the committee will have the opportunity to comment, discuss, and recommend changes and edits. The February meeting will include an opportunity to discuss the Introduction Section (pages 1-5) and that section has been included in that packet. The committee is being asked to review the Introduction Section and bring any suggested changes forward for discussion.

Survey and Community Workshop

As part of this planning process, a community survey will be developed. It is suggested that 1-2 committee members work with staff to develop the survey. Once a draft survey has been completed, that draft will be brought before the committee for review and approval. A possible Community Workshop could also be held in conjunction with the survey. The committee will be asked to discuss potential merits of this at an upcoming meeting.

Energy Audit Data

As part of plan development, staff will work to compile City owned building energy audit data and fleet data. The tracking software that will be utilized is ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. This software is free to use and is used by many communities throughout the state for energy tracking. Focus on Energy has a small grant opportunity for municipalities that includes technical assistance to learn how to use the software and a small monetary grant. Staff will meet with Focus on Energy staff on Friday 1/30 to begin initial discussions and explore the opportunity further.

Common Council Update

Plan development and updates will be provided to Common Council throughout the upcoming year.



**GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE**

This template was developed by the Great Plains Institute with funding from the Metropolitan Council and the McKnight Foundation.

City of Wausau

Climate Action Work Plan

2026-2031



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Great Plains Institute for free use of this template. The template was created with funding from the Metropolitan Council and the McKnight Foundation. The purpose of the template is to provide cities with a template to help guide short-term climate action planning in their community.

Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee Members

Jean Abreu, Chair
Christine Daniels
Jesse Kearns
Lauren Leitner
Alder Carol Lukens
Britnie Remer
Daniel Zinsmeister

City Council Alderpersons

Becky McElhaney
Aaron Griner
Chad Henke
Terry Kilian
Lou Larson
Carol Lukens
Michael Martens
Tom Neal
Lisa Rasmussen
Vicki Tierney
Sarah Watson

City of Wausau Staff

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Introduction

The City of Wausau is committed to taking action to make our community more sustainable. The City of Wausau 2026-2031 Climate Action Work Plan was developed over the course of **nine months** with the oversight of the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) and included a **community meeting and community survey**. The plan includes goals related to clean energy, transportation, land use, economic development, climate adaptation, waste management, health, and much more.

Our sustainability initiatives are intended to benefit our community, our economy, and our environment. This work wouldn't be possible without City of Wausau residents, businesses, and organizations. To learn how you can get involved with our community's sustainability initiatives, please visit the [City of Wausau Sustainability page](#).

The first section of the plan examines existing conditions, or where the City is today. It highlights key areas and data most relevant to sustainability, including population, income, transportation habits, waste, energy burden, and solar potential, all of which provide insight into current conditions and future opportunities. The second section presents a Citywide greenhouse gas emissions inventory. By analyzing building energy use, fleet operations, and waste data, the City can begin tracking progress toward clean energy goals. The final section outlines a five-year work plan with specific strategies to advance the City's sustainability objectives.

Paragraph with context (as necessary): The City Council adopted the CAWP on DATE. Finally, the CAWP is and should be treated as a living document, which will benefit from an annual review process overseen by the Sustainability Commission.

Background

PREVIOUS PLANNING DOCUMENTS

2022 City of Wausau Five-Year Strategic Plan. Highlights investments in solutions to ensure environmental sustainability and commitment to environmental justice.

2017 City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan. Includes sustainability goals including environmental initiatives and multimodal transportation.

CITY ENACTMENTS

2023 Resolution Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Security. In 2023, the City of Wausau passed a resolution supporting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy security. With this, the City committed 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.

2021 Resolution for Environmental Justice. In 2021 the City of Wausau passed a resolution supporting environmental justice.

2018 Ordinance for Creating the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee. Created as an advisory body to Common Council in the development of policies, programs, and decisions that affect the relationship between the City and the environment.

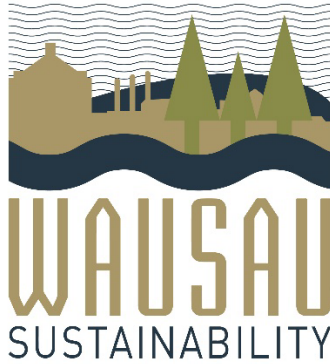
2009 Resolution Recognizing the City of Wausau and an Eco-Municipality that Promotes and Utilizes Sustainable Practices. The City of Wausau endorses the principles of sustainability and applies them in decision making, planning, policy making, and municipal practices.

2008 Resolution for Creating an Ad Hoc Committee for a Greener Tomorrow. In 2008 the Common Council established a committee directed toward creating a sustainable community.

ASSOCIATIONS

Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition (WLGCC). The Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition provides a platform for members to collaborate on overcoming barriers to decarbonization, accelerating local climate change solutions and ensuring the benefits of the clean energy economy are distributed to everyone throughout the state. Wausau has been a member since 2023.

WDNR Green Tier Legacy Community (GTLC). The Green Tier Legacy Community program includes local government leaders building sustainable and resilient communities. Membership includes education, collaboration, and special consideration for state grants. Wausau has been a member since 2020.



2025 Wausau Sustainability Awards Application

The Wausau Sustainability Awards recognize individuals, businesses, and organizations that are committed to creating a more sustainable and energy-smart Wausau. These awards are also meant to share examples of sustainability initiatives and projects with residents, businesses, community groups, and nonprofits and encourage similar projects.

*Application window opens on **Monday, September 22**, and application deadline is **Sunday, October 19**.*

1. Your contact information:

Name(s): Liz Reynolds
Street/City/Zip: 1323 S. 11th Ave., Wausau, WI 54401
Phone #: 715-847-0582 E-mail : liz.reynolds@kolbewindows.com
Eligibility (circle one): Self-nominating Nominating another

2. Nominee's contact information:

Name of individual, business or organization: _____
Website of nominee (if available): _____
Name of contact person: _____
Contact person's e-mail: _____
Street/City/Zip: _____

3. How would you best describe the nominee (check all that apply):

- Energy: Renewables, Efficiency or Conservation** – Efforts to reduce energy consumption or increase the use of renewables, including transportation demand management. Consideration is given to the level of investment, documented reduction/generation of energy, reach of the effort and/or greenhouse gas emissions.

If you have questions about Wausau Sustainability Awards contact Carrie Edmondson at carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov or 715-261-6009.

- **Environmental Education** – Programs and projects that effectively teach both children and adults how to learn about their environment and to make intelligent, informed decisions about how to take care of it.
- **Resource Conservation, Preservation or Stewardship** – Individuals, businesses, and organizations that demonstrate their commitment to the improvement of the Wausau community by conserving, preserving, replanting or restoring the natural environment, improving water quality or reclaiming the urban environment either directly through programs and actions or indirectly through innovative products or practices. This also could include innovations in waste management, recycling or composting.
- **Green Site and/or Building Design** – The design, development, construction, or renovation of buildings and sites in ways that set an example and/or exceed standard energy efficiency, incorporate low impact design, preserve natural site features and resources, use of green infrastructure stormwater management BMPs, create healthy indoor conditions, etc.
- **Health, Food and Agriculture** – Individuals, businesses, and organizations that demonstrate commitment to producing, using, or promoting local, sustainable, healthy food, or increasing access to healthy food for underserved populations.
- **Student Leadership** – An individual student, school group or community youth group that demonstrates excellence in a sustainability effort.
- **City Staff** - Staff that goes beyond job duties to improve sustainability for City policies, programs, or operations.
- **Other** – If you have a sustainable project that doesn't fit one of the above categories, please suggest another category: _____

4. **Describe the nomination in 150 words or less. Be sure to include if the project/initiative served an underserved population and any partnerships formed as a result of the project/initiative.**

Kolbe Windows & Doors demonstrates leadership in energy efficiency and renewable energy through significant investments and partnerships. In 2024-2025, Kolbe installed a 999.6-kilowatt solar energy system atop its Wausau manufacturing facility, consisting of 2,061 photovoltaic panels to help offset the total energy consumption. This project, partially funded by the USDA Rural Energy for America Program, reflects a strong public-private collaboration and

If you have questions about Wausau Sustainability Awards contact Carrie Edmondson at carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov or 715-261-6009.

commitment to sustainability. Additional initiatives include a solar array on Kolbe's Innovation Greenhouse, LED high-bay lighting upgrades, and optimized air systems—all reducing energy use and environmental impact. These efforts align with Kolbe's philosophy of minimizing waste and promoting responsible practices, benefiting the local community and industry partners.

5. Describe in 150 words or less the outcomes or results of the effort using specific examples, data, and/or other evidence.

Kolbe's sustainability initiatives have delivered measurable results. The 999.6-kilowatt solar system reduced facility energy consumption by 45%, significantly lowering operational costs and greenhouse gas emissions. A 19.72-kilowatt solar array on the Innovation Greenhouse reinforces renewable energy integration. Efficiency upgrades—such as replacing 200 LED high-bay lights—achieved 40% power savings, while compressor runtime reductions and optimized air makeup units added further energy and cost reductions. Transitioning to water-based finishes eliminated a large natural gas thermal oxidizer, reducing emissions. Recycling programs diverted over 177,000 lbs. of aluminum and nearly 250,000 lbs. of vinyl, fiberglass, and insulating materials from landfills. These documented improvements showcase Kolbe's commitment to energy conservation, innovation, and environmental stewardship.

6. Please include links or photocopies of any press reports that describe the project/initiative, such as news articles, photographs, web articles, newsletter articles, etc.

7. Please note that at minimum, one photo of the project/initiative will be needed for possible use in any announcements of honorees. If no photo is available, a volunteer is available to take one.

Honors will be presented at a regular meeting of the city council. Award winner should be present at the city council meeting and is encouraged to make a short acceptance speech.

Please submit application and materials electronically to: [Carrie Edmondson](#).

If you have questions about Wausau Sustainability Awards contact Carrie Edmondson at carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov or 715-261-6009.



Media contact: Heather West, 612-724-8760, heather@heatherwestpr.com

New Solar Panel System Highlights Energy Efficiency at Kolbe

Wausau, Wisconsin (April 22, 2025) – Kolbe Windows & Doors recently completed and activated a significant solar panel system on the roof of its main manufacturing facility in Wausau, Wisconsin. This 999.6-kilowatt (kW) alternative energy system, consisting of 2,061 photovoltaic panels, is expected to offset 31.8% of the plant’s current energy consumption.

Kolbe worked closely with Northwind Solar located in Amherst, Wisconsin, on the design and installation of the system. The innovative double-sided design of the panels allows them to capture sunlight even after snowfall by gathering reflected light through the underside of the panel. The installation began in 2024 and was partially funded by a USDA Rural Development grant as part of the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

“We are thrilled to be utilizing the unused space on the roof of our facility for something so impactful: increasing our operational efficiencies and reducing our carbon footprint,” said Kolbe Windows & Doors president, Jeff DeLonay. “This project represents a major part of our efforts to better serving our team, our community and our environment.”

Additionally, in 2022, Kolbe installed a smaller 19.72-kW, 58-panel solar configuration on the roof of its Innovation Greenhouse, also located in Wausau.

Kolbe’s commitment to energy efficiency extends beyond the solar panel system. The company has implemented several initiatives, including the installation of timer-controlled LED high bay lights, an optimized humidification system and air make-up units (AMUs) to enhance energy efficiency.

To learn more about Kolbe please visit <https://www.kolbewindows.com/our-story>

What began in 1946 as a two-brother team has grown into an internationally respected manufacturing company. Kolbe Windows & Doors is one of the nation’s leading manufacturers of windows and doors for residential and commercial markets. After 75 years, Kolbe products are best known for superior quality, custom craftsmanship, attention to detail, as well as innovative and unique designs.

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