



OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Human Resources Committee
DATE/TIME: Monday, January 12, 2026 at 4:45 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Becky McElhaney (C) Terry Kilian (VC)
Michael Martens Vicki Tierney
Chad Henke

- 1 Public comment on agenda items and reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.**
- 2 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).**
Approval of the November 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- 3 Discussion.**
 - a. Human Resources Report for December 2025
 - b. Informative Discussion: RFP for Legal Services; Employee Handbook Revision
- 4 Adjournment.**

Becky McElhaney, Chair

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

DATE:
TIME:
POSTED BY:



This meeting can be viewed on
YouTube and Channel 981 on Cable TV

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City of Wausau
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wausauwi.gov



DRAFT

**CITY OF WAUSAU HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OPEN SESSION**

DATE/TIME: November 10, 2025, at 4:45 p.m.
LOCATION: City Hall (407 Grant Street) – Council Chambers
MEMBERS PRESENT: Becky McElhaney (C), Terry Kilian (VC), Chad Henke, Michael Martens, Vicki Tierney
MEMBERS ABSENT:
Also Present: Lisa Nowak

Public Comment on Agenda Items and Reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.

No public comment on agenda items.

Approval of October 13, 2025 Minutes.

Motion by Tierney to approve the October 13, 2025 minutes. Second by Kilian. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Human Resources Report for October 2025.

No questions were brought forward by the committee.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve 2026 3% COLA for Non-Represented Employees Effective December 21, 2025.

Nowak explained that she used information from the BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics) to determine the cost-of-living increase adjustment percentage for the city’s non-represented workers and believes that a 3% COLA will keep the city competitive with wages, reducing potential turnover.

Tierney asked if this was in addition to merit increases and lump sum payouts for those at the top of the scale. Nowak responded that most employees receive an annual merit increase but there are situations in which they may not, and no lump sum payouts are received by those who are red lined. Discussion about the current compensation system followed. Nowak said that the COLA carries a cost of \$387,227.00. Martens said that this is already in the 2026 budget. Tierney expressed that although it is in the budget doesn’t mean that it needs to be approved and believes that a merit-based increase would be fairer.

Kilian said that she shares many of the concerns Tierney brought up and thanked Nowak for the information provided for determining the COLA rate.

Motion by Martens to approve the 2026 3% COLA for non-represented employees effective December 21, 2025. Second by Henke. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

DRAFT

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve MLK In-Service Day.

Nowak said that City Hall has closed to the public on MLK Day under Mayor Rosenberg and Mayor Diny to provide an in-service day, but this has never been formally adopted, making it difficult to plan for each year. Nowak would like to have MLK Day formally identified as an in-service day in the handbook and have team building and training for employees. This will also provide adequate notice to the public that City Hall will be closed to the public.

Kilian said celebrating Martin Luther King Day is wonderful as well as having team building activities. Kilian would like some sort of formal agenda so that residents can know City Hall is closed and what employees will be doing. Nowak said that having a year to plan will make this much easier.

Motion by Kilian to approve MLK In-Service Day. Second by Martens. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Add to Staff: CDA Part-Time Building Maintenance Technician.

Juli Birkenmeier said that this item was brought to the CDA Board in October and was approved to hire a 20-hour per week position starting in January 2026. Birkenmeier said that this position will not affect the city's budget since the department is funded through HUD. The position is intended to help the current staff and reduce the workload and overtime of current maintenance staff at CDA.

Henke asked Birkenmeier to provide more information that was received during the CDA Board meeting that helped with their decision. Birkenmeier explained the tenure of the current staff and their responsibilities and need for knowledge transfer when the current staff retire.

Kilian asked if hiring this position will be enough to reduce the need to hire contractors for some of the maintenance items and HUD requirements. Birkenmeier said yes.

Motion by Henke to approve the addition of a CDA part-time Building Maintenance Technician. Second by Tierney. All ayes. Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment.

Motion by Kilian to adjourn. Second by Tierney. Meeting was adjourned.

Rebecca McElhaney
Human Resources Committee, Chair

Video available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xldz7EeOOc>



HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Core Services

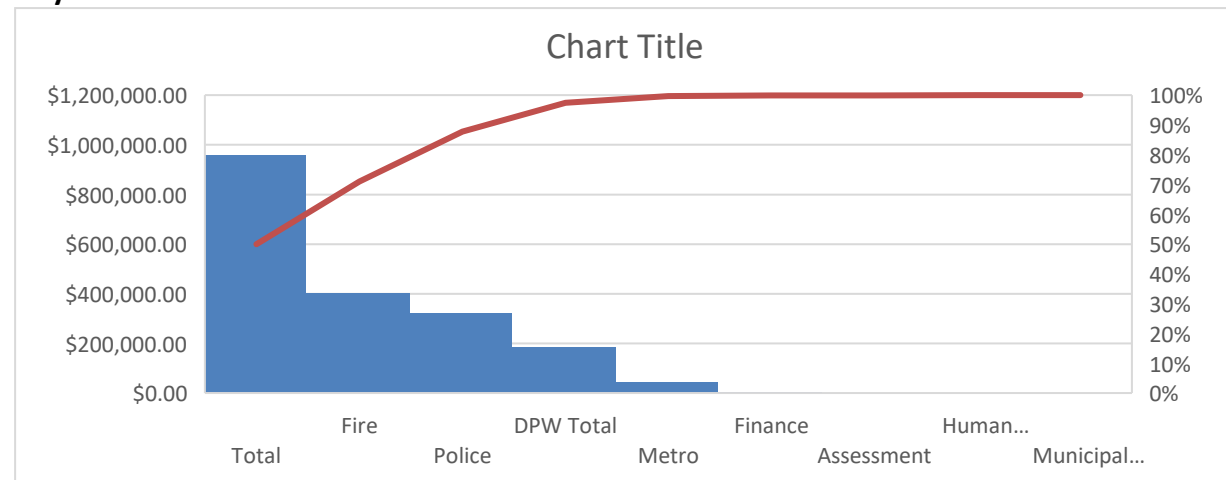
Classification & Compensation

Completed Reclassification Requests

Original Job Position/Salary Range	Requested Job Position/Salary Range	Approved Job Position/Salary Range	Request Date	Council Approval Date
City Assessor, Grade 10	City Assessor, Grade 5	City Assessor, Grade 5	6/09/25	7/08/25
Deputy City Assessor, Grade 15	Deputy City Assessor, Grade 12	Deputy City Assessor, Grade 12	6/09/25	7/08/25
Senior Property Appraiser, Grade 17	Property Appraiser II, Grade 16	Property Appraiser II, Grade 16	6/09/25	7/08/25
Property Appraiser, Grade 18	Property Appraiser I, Grade 17	Property Appraiser I, Grade 17	6/09/25	7/08/25
Senior HR Generalist, Grade 15	Assistant HR Director, Grade 12	Assistant HR Director, Grade 12	10/13/25	10/28/25

Department	Overtime YTD
Municipal Court	\$82.32
Human Resources	\$396.52
Assessment	\$617.40
Finance	\$5689.13
Metro	\$47527.14
DPW Total	\$246088.45
Police	\$441500.87
Fire	\$433244.07
Total	\$1,175,145.90

City of Wausau Overtime Data





HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Employee Benefits

Family Medical Leave (YTD)

Requests Received	Approved	Pending	Denied/Cancelled
111	88	7	16

FMLA Denial Reasons

Paperwork not returned	Insufficient years of service/hours	Condition does not qualify	Cancelled by employee
7	2	4	3

Workers Compensation (YTD)

Number of Claims	Lost Time	Medical Only
22	4	18

Recordable (YTD)

Department	Nature	Medical/Indemnity	Open/Closed	Date of Injury
CDA	Head	Indemnity	Closed	01/13/25
Fire	Finger	Medical	Closed	01/28/25
DPW	Eye	Medical	Closed	02/06/25
Police	Privacy	Medical	Closed	02/28/25
DPW	Shoulder	Medical	Closed	03/04/25
Police	Hand	Medical	Closed	04/26/25
DPW	Eye	Medical	Closed	05/06/25
Assessment	Ankle	Indemnity	Open	05/06/25
DPW	Knee	Medical	Closed	04/04/25
DPW	Heat Exhaustion	Medical	Closed	06/13/25
DPW	Ankle	Medical	Open	06/30/25
Fire	Back	Medical	Open	07/20/25
Fire	Elbow	Medical	Open	07/22/25
Police	Head	Medical	Open	08/26/25
Metro	Chest	Medical	Open	09/03/25
DPW	Elbow	Medical	Open	09/16/25
Police	Hand	Medical	Open	10/13/25
Fire	Privacy	Medical	Open	11/24/25
DPW	Shoulder	Medical	Open	11/30/25
PD	Knee	Indemnity	Open	12/01/25
PD	Respiratory	Medical	Open	12/27/25
Fire	Back	Indemnity	Open	12/28/25



HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Open Cases from previous years

Department	Nature	Medical/Indemnity	Open/Closed	Date of Injury
Fire	Feet	Indemnity	Reopened	03/19/24
Police	Knee injury	Indemnity	Open	05/14/23

Employee and Labor Relations

Grievances (YTD)

Number of Grievances	Open Grievances	Closed Grievances	Non-Represented Grievances	ATU (Metro) Grievances	WPPA (Police) Grievances	WFA (Fire) Grievances

Recruitment & Selection

New Hires

Employee Name	Department	Job Title	Hire Date	Separation Date
Molly Shnowske	Police	Police Officer	1/10	
Savannah Reed	Police	Police Officer	1/10	
Daniel Rich	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	1/20	8/09
Matthew Bahr	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	2/03	
Ethan Kariger	Fire	Apprentice Firefighter/Paramedic	2/03	
Jess Myerscough	Fire	Apprentice Firefighter/Paramedic	2/03	
Dallas Pagel	Wastewater	Collection System Technician	2/17	
Amanda Goetsch	Police	Administrative Assistant II	3/03	3/04
Nicharee Kasamwat	Finance	Accountant – Revenue	3/03	
Dawson Stapleton	Wastewater	Wastewater Plant Operations Technician	3/03	
Jared Jacobs	Fire	Apprentice Firefighter/Paramedic	3/03	
Nathaniel Cumberland	Fire	Apprentice Firefighter/Paramedic	3/03	
Matthew Sitte	Fire	Apprentice Firefighter/Paramedic	3/17	
Matthew Kell	DPW-Maintenance Div.	Building Maintenance Technician	3/17	8/22
Riley Humphrey	Fire	Apprentice Firefighter/Paramedic	3/17	
Dustin Gessert	Water	Water Distribution Maintainer	3/17	4/25
Brook Jorgensen	Metro Ride	Bus Operator II	3/31	7/25
Brenda Lee	Police	Administrative Assistant II	4/14	



HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Employee Name	Department	Job Title	Hire Date	Separation Date
Lisa Nowak	Human Resources	Human Resources Director	4/14	
Amy Bolder	CD Authority	Housing Project Coordinator	4/28	
Breanna Smith	Metro Ride	Bus Operator II	4/28	
Carrie Edmondson	Community Development	Assistant City Planner	4/28	
Cory Hanson	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	5/12	
Thomas Schumacher	Mayor's Office	Executive Assistant	5/12	
Anne Bares	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	6/09	
Zachary Harris	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	6/09	11/24
Zachary Hernandez	Public Works	Street Maintainer	6/23	12/19
Tonya Morris	Finance	Administrative Assistant III	7/07	7/22
Kong Lao	Public Works	Municipal Fleet Technician	7/21	
Isaac Wolfgram	Metro Ride	Facilities Maintenance Worker	7/21	
Cody Friedenfels	Police	Police Officer	8/13	
Dakota Heidmann	Police	Police Officer	8/13	
Eric Valadez	Police	Police Officer	8/13	
Tanner Duwe	Public Works	Street Maintainer	8/13	
Michelle Van Krey	Community Development	Administrative Assistant II	8/13	
Jacob Anderson	Police	Community Communications Specialist	9/02	
Hope Sigmund	Metro Ride	Bus Operator I	9/08	
Benjamin Guiry	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	9/15	
Patrick Gatterman	Community Development	Economic Development Manager	9/22	
Justin Borski	Fire	Firefighter/Paramedic	9/22	
James Murphy	Public Works	Street Maintainer	9/29	
Ellice Harris	Finance	Administrative Assistant III	10/13	
Angelica Ortegon-Ramirez	Metro Ride	Bus Operator I	10/13	
Jason Hankins	Metro Ride	Bus Operator I	10/13	
Kyle Kotila	Public Works	Street Maintainer	11/10	
Peter Severson	Public Works	Street Maintainer	11/24	
Nicholas Neidlein	Public Works	Street Maintainer	11/24	

Separations YTD

Total Number of Separations	Resignations	Retirements	Terminations
44	32	5	7



HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Separations by Department for 2025 YTD

Assessment - 1	Mayor's Office - 1	DPW Maintenance - 2	Water - 3	Metro Ride - 5
Customer Service – 2	Com Dev - 2	DPW Streets – 9	Sewer - 1	Police -6
Finance - 2	CDA - 1	DPW Motor Pool – 2		Fire - 5
Human Resources - 1	Engineering - 1			

Promotions/Transfers

Employee Name	Old Job Position	New Job Position	Previous Incumbent	Effective Date
Andrew Lynch	Assistant City Planner	Economic Development Manager	Randy Fifrick	2/17
Shahn Kariger	Fire Lieutenant Inspector	Fire Prevention Division Chief	Brian Stahl	3/03
Ronald Schuenke	Transit Maintenance Supervisor	Deputy Transit Director	Megan Newman	3/09
Justin Major	CSO	CSO II	New Position	3/24
Matthew Gouin	CSO	CSO II	New Position	3/24
Kevin Marulli	Street Maintainer	Equipment Operator	Nicholas Bradfish	5/15
Frank Ortegon-Ramirez	Bus Operator I	Bus Operator II	Jacob Will	5/25
Brad Ludwig	Firefighter/Paramedic Inspector	Fire Lieutenant Prevention	Shahn Kariger	5/25
Thomas Bauer	Transit Operations Supervisor	Transit Maintenance Supervisor	Ronald Schuenke	5/25
Ross Austin	Police Officer	Detective	Anthony Reince	6/23
Chase Paul	Water Plant Operations Tech	Water Plant Operator	Samuel Mingo	6/29
Tracy Pagryzinski	Bus Operator II	Transit Operations Supervisor	Thomas Bauer	7/20
Kamryn Batt	Street Maintainer	Equipment Operator	Timothy Wensel	7/20
Kristeen Quale	Property Appraiser	Property Appraiser II	New	7/20
Ethan Bares	Community Communications Specialist	Police Officer	Payton Wright	8/13
Josh Borelli	Senior Equipment Operator	Public Works Supervisor	Chad Abbiehl	9/14
Zackery Fleming	Equipment Operator	Senior Equipment Operator	Josh Borelli	10/12
David Bertram	Detective	Police Officer	n/a	10/12
Robert Horstmeyer	Police Officer	Detective	David Bertram	10/29
Sarah Bedish	Police Officer	Detective	n/a	10/26
Anne Keenan	Senior HR Generalist	Assistant HR Director	New	11/09



HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Active Recruitments

Job Title	# of Vacancies	Date Vacant	Status
Assistant City Attorney	1	7/19/24	In process
Building Maintenance Technician - DPW	1	8/22	Open until filled
Building Maintenance Technician – CDA	1	New Position	In process
Street Maintainer	1	12/19	Open until filled
Transit Director	1	9/19	In process
Water Plant Operations Technician	1	8/12	In process

Vacant Positions (Not Being Recruited at this time)

Job Title	Number of Vacancies	Date Vacant	Status
Accountant	1	10/27/25	Waiting for approval to post.
Assistant City Attorney	1	11/13/24	Attorney's Office is hiring one position.
City Surveyor	1	1/07/25	No successful recruitment in 2025, reopening in Spring 2026.
Fire Training Division Chief	1	1/20	Chief is revising position.
Senior Collection System Technician	1	New Position '24	Waiting for approval to post.
Water Treatment Operations Supervisor	1	New Position '24	Waiting for approval to post.

Vacation Accrual Exceptions

Employee Name	Current Accrual Maximum Cap	Cap Waived Until (Date)	Reason for Waiver
MaryAnne Groat		Worked out a plan with mayor to get under cap within 3 years	ERP project needs
Jennifer Norton		12/31/24	ERP project needs
Jennifer Kannenberg		12/31/24	ERP project needs
Anne Keenan		04/01/25	Called in on vacation day
Rick Rubow		Worked out a plan with the mayor	Staffing Issues
Peggy Steinke		6/1/2025	Work on Adaptive Budgeting and ADP payroll implementation



HR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Handbook Modifications

Section Modified	Modification	Date
5.15	Adjusted amount for cold weather gear	01/19/25
5.15	Added language for safety glasses and reimbursement	01/28/25
5.10	Added language for utility incentives	01/28/25
1.01	Added language for EEO	02/25/25
8.04	Added additional leave only bank	02/25/25
4.03	Added Community Development Authority to part C	7/14
3.04	Added language to carve-out for independent authority review for items that may concern any relative of HR Director	7/14
7.01	Remove Wisconsin Retirement System from language	9/09
8.01	Remove Wisconsin Retirement System from language	9/09
5.15	Adjust boot reimbursement to up to \$125 annual (removed 50% language)	9/23

Employee Recognitions – Discretionary Performance Incentives

Last Name	Job Title	Dept	Reason	% Increase-Base	Lump Sum Increase	Other Incentive	Date Issued
Scheffler	Admin Asst III	metro	goes above and beyond daily and assists with being short staffed.	1.5%			3/16/25



CITY OF WAUSAU

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Human Resources Committee

From: Lisa Nowak, Human Resources Director

Date: January 12, 2026

RE: Request for Proposal Process - Legal Review of Employee Handbook

In Quarter 1 of 2026 I will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for legal services to support the comprehensive revision of the City of Wausau Employee Handbook. As you may be aware, our current handbook has not been meaningfully updated in over a decade and contains outdated policies, internal contradictions, and organizational issues that need to be addressed to ensure legal compliance and operational clarity.

Over the past several weeks, I have been conducting a thorough audit of the existing handbook, cataloging all policies, identifying redundancies and conflicts, and gathering input from City leadership and Department Directors. This audit has revealed several critical issues requiring legal expertise, including duplicate and conflicting policies, outdated references to federal regulations, missing policies for contemporary workplace issues such as remote work arrangements, and overly detailed sections that would be better suited as separate administrative policies.

The RFP will seek qualified attorneys or law firms with specific expertise in municipal employment law, public sector human resources, and Wisconsin employment regulations. The scope of services will include a comprehensive legal review of all revised policies for compliance with current federal, state, and local laws; guidance on resolving policy conflicts and contradictions; recommendations for drafting or reviewing new policy language for emerging workplace issues; and ensuring the handbook appropriately addresses at-will employment status, collective bargaining agreement interactions, and grievance procedures. I anticipate completing the internal revision work and issuing the RFP within the next 60-90 days, with legal review to follow.

Given our limited budget, I will be completing the substantial groundwork of auditing, organizing feedback, and drafting revisions internally. The legal services will focus specifically on legal compliance review and risk mitigation rather than wholesale rewriting, which should help control costs while ensuring we receive the expert legal guidance necessary for a handbook of this scope and importance. I will keep the Committee updated as this process progresses. Funds for services have been earmarked through the approved 2026 annual budget, and I have partnered with the City Attorney in adherence with our Procurement Policy.

Respectfully,

Lisa M. Nowak, MS HRD, SHRM-CP

City of Wausau Human Resources Director