



OFFICIAL MINUTE PROCEEDINGS REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Common Council
DATE/TIME: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 6:30 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

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

1 Call to order by the presiding officer.

Mayor Doug Diny presided.
The meeting was called to order at 06:31 PM.

Roll Call indicated 11 members present.
Members Present - Carol Lukens, Michael Martens, Terry Kilian, Tom Neal, Aaron Griner, Becky McElhaney, Lisa Rasmussen, Sarah Watson, Vicki Tierney, Lou Larson, Chad Henke
Members Absent -
Members Excused -
Present 11, Absent 0, Excused 0

2 Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call and Proclamations.

3 Presentations.

Presentation by GEI Consultants regarding a regulatory case update for the former Wausau Incubator Site BRRTS#: 02-37-587081 (1300 Cleveland Ave).

Unnamed consultants from GEI Consultants, presented an environmental regulatory case update for 1300 Cleveland Avenue.

Discussion was held. No action was taken.

Presentation by North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) on the City of Wausau Housing for Older Adults Report 2025.

Sam Wessel, AICP, Senior Planner and Assistant Director at the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), presented on the City of Wausau Housing for Older Adults Report 2025.

Discussion was held. No action was taken.

4 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting, approval of the minutes if correct, and correction of mistakes if any.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Kilian, to approve all items outlined below.

Yes 11, No 0, Abstained 0

MOTION PASSED.

December 12, 2025 Regular Common Council Minutes.

5 Reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.

Mayor Diny read the Public Comment Statement.

6 Comments and suggestions from preregistered citizens.

1. Kurt Hase, 611 West Street - spoke on item agenda item 26-0102.

7 Consent agenda.

Without objection, item 25-1110 was pulled from the Consent Agenda by the Chair.

Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Neal, to approve all items outlined below.

Yes 11, No 0, Abstained 0

MOTION PASSED.

26-0107 Resolution from the Infrastructure & Facilities Committee Approving a Petition to the State of Wisconsin, Office of the Commissioner of Railroads ("OCR"), to Establish a Public Bicycle/Pedestrian Crossing, Across the Railroad Tracks at the South end of Gilbert Park.

26-0108 Resolution from the Public Health & Safety Committee Approving or Denying Various Licenses as Indicated.

26-0105 Joint Resolution from the Finance Committee and the Wausau Water Works Commission Declaring Official Intent to Reimburse Expenditures from the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Program for the BIL SFY26 LSL Program in Year 2026.

24-1111 Final Resolution from the Infrastructure & Facilities Committee to Levy Special Assessments for the 2025 Alley Paving Project.

26-0103 Resolution from the Infrastructure & Facilities Committee Approving Agreement for the Management and Maintenance of a Stormwater Facility (Marathon County Historical Society - 1009 North 3rd Street).

25-1206 Resolution from Economic Development Committee Approving the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding City of Wausau's Construction Loan Agreement with Sunbelt Refugees LLC and Limited Waiver of Right of First Refusal (130 N 1st Street).

99-1104 Resolution from the Finance Committee Modifying the Procurement Policy.

8 Ordinances and resolutions.

25-1110 Resolution from the Infrastructure & Facilities Committee Approving 2026 Construction Projects and Authorization to Let Bids.

Motion by Alderperson Henke, seconded by Alderperson Watson, to approve.

Yes - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Neal, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson McElhaney, Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Tierney, Alderperson Larson, Alderperson Henke

No - Alderperson Kilian

Abstained - None

Yes 10, No 1, Abstained 0

MOTION PASSED.

26-0104 Ordinance from Infrastructure & Facilities Committee Amending Section 10.20.080(c) No Parking and Restricted Parking Areas Designated by Excluding Angled Parking on McIndoe Street between 3rd and 4th Streets, Franklin Street Beginning at the Intersection with 4th Street and Extending East 150 Feet, the West Side of 4th Street between Grant Street and Franklin Street and the East Side of 4th Street Beginning at the Intersection with Franklin Street and Extending North 130 Feet.

Neal stated this may defeat the purpose of supporting the YMCA's parking needs as this change would allow anyone to park in these additional spots, regardless of if they are a member of the YMCA or not. It was further stated that this parking is for all residents, not just the members of the YMCA, and suggested a parking pass instead. Neal stated his opposition.

Larson stated support as the YMCA had partly funded the construction of the additional spots and if the parking is restricted to two-hour parking only, it exploits members of the YMCA when programming lasts longer than the two-hour period.

Rasmussen stated the problem that exists with parking by the YMCA was created by the city as the Common Council chose not to allow for additional parking lots to be created, instead opting for creating more street parking. It was further stated the additional parking was meant to help the YMCA expand programming within the community. Rasmussen stated support to try the ordinance change to accommodate the needs of the community.

Kilian stated a need for consistency within the parking policy of the downtown area, and that it could create issues for other people with parking needs.

Tierney stated that while the YMCA had partly funded the construction of the additional spots, the parking spots are maintained and regulated by the city on an ongoing basis. It was further stated there was a need for consistency within the parking policy and stated opposition.

Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Larson, to approve.
Yes - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Larson, Alderperson Henke
No - Alderperson Kilian, Alderperson Neal, Alderperson McElhaney, Alderperson Tierney
Abstained - None
Yes 7, No 4, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.

9 Suspend Rule 11(A) Referral of ordinances,12(A) Referral of resolutions, 1(D) Transmission of Committee business to the Council, and 6 (B) Filing.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Martens, to suspend Rule 11(A) Referral of ordinances,12(A) Referral of resolutions, 1(D) Transmission of Committee business to the Council, and 6 (B) Filing.
Yes - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Kilian, Alderperson Neal, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson McElhaney , Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Tierney, Alderperson Henke
No - Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Larson
Abstained - None
Yes 9, No 2, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.

26-0102 Confirming Appointments of the Mayor of the City of Wausau to the Ethics Board.

Neal stated opposition due to a troublesome history that the appointee may have with the city as a former employee, prompting questions of neutrality on matters before the Ethics Board.

Kilian stated the appointee is an attorney with a tremendous amount of experience with the city and municipal law. It was stated that the employment situation of the appointee is not the issue but whether the appointee is a qualified candidate for the Ethics Board.

Larson stated it would be a conflict of interest for the appointee to serve on the Ethics Board as a former employee.

Griner stated the appointee's confirmation would mean that over half of the Ethics Board would be made up of attorneys and questioned if that was a diverse group of citizens.

Tierney stated the Common Council had previously suggested that the Ethics Board be made up of prominent community members like clergy members and attorneys, which this fulfills. It was further stated that the appointee's prior employment experience does not mean the appointee would not serve as an important member of the Ethics Board with the experience held.

Lukens stated constituents had voiced concerns with recent employees serving on the Ethics Board.

Neal stated constituents had also voiced concerns about confirming the appointee.

Motion by Alderperson Tierney, seconded by Alderperson Kilian, to approve.
Yes - Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Kilian, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson McElhaney, Alderperson Tierney, Alderperson Henke
No - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Neal, Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Larson
Abstained - None
Yes 6, No 5, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.

26-0106 Ordinance from the Common Council Amending Sections 2.03.020 Definitions, 2.03.030 Standards of conduct, 2.03.040 Organization, Composition and Authority of the Board and 2.03.060 Violations and Complaints.

Rasmussen stated concerns with the Ethics Board being empowered to enact investigations of alleged violations on its own instead of a verified complaint from a resident. It was further stated that this could be an expensive consequence and, because of that, Rasmussen stated support for the amendment.

Larson stated support of the amendment as there are not pressing issues prompting the need for these ordinance changes. It was stated this could be used as a tool for retribution.

Motion by Alderperson Neal, seconded by Alderperson Rasmussen, to amend Ordinance 26-0106 to remove the words "upon its own motion or" in Section 3. (b).
Yes 11, No 0, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.

McElhaney stated concerns with the Ethics Board determining the definition of reputational damage as that is not a quantitative standard outlined. McElhaney stated opposition as the changes proposed opened many unnecessary doors.

Kilian stated many of the changes proposed are questionable and further stated opposition.

Lukens stated the changes proposed lead to the question of what is or is not ethical as too subjective and further stated opposition.

Larson stated concerns with a more subjective ethics code preventing many people running for public office.

Rasmussen stated that modifying rules to fit a situation, which prompted this proposed change, was not good policy making. It was further stated the change was too subjective and hard to quantify prompting opposition.

Motion by Alderperson Henke, seconded by Alderperson Griner, to approve as amended.
Yes 0, No 11, Abstained 0
MOTION FAILED.

25-0427 Resolution from the Common Council Approving Second Amended and Restated Declaration of Easement – 700 Grand Avenue.

Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Henke, to approve.
Yes - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Neal, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson McElhaney, Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Tierney, Alderperson Larson, Alderperson Henke
No - Alderperson Kilian
Abstained - None
Yes 10, No 1, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.

05-1209 Resolution from the Finance Committee Terminating Tax Increment District Number 7.

Neal stated opposition to keep the Tax Increment District open to help fund low-income housing development to help the city meet housing needs.

The Chair ruled Neal's comments out of order as the comments pertained to the extension of TID 7 when termination of TID 7 was the matter before the body only.

Rasmussen stated support as this was the proper time to terminate the TID and that was a formality as the Common Council had already decided not to extend TID 7.

Larson stated support to fund the general fund to meet city service needs and that significant progress has been made in affordable housing.

Motion by Alderperson Rasmussen, seconded by Alderperson Griner, to approve.

Yes - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Kilian, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson McElhaney, Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Tierney, Alderperson Larson

No - Alderperson Neal, Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Henke

Abstained - None

Yes 8, No 3, Abstained 0

MOTION PASSED.

26-0109 Joint Resolution from the Committee of the Whole and Finance Committee Authorizing a Referendum and Related Question for the City of Wausau to Increase the Property Tax Levy in the Amount of \$1,450,000 on an Ongoing Basis to Retain 12 Firefighter/Paramedics and Offset Expiring Grants.

Rasmussen questioned if it would be appropriate to reduce the amount of the ask of the referendum by less, with the funding from the closure of the TID going into the general revenue fund.

Tierney stated the closure of the TID would be better to assist with future budget shortfalls instead of reducing the ask in the referendum.

Neal stated opposition of the ask for an ongoing basis on an increase in the levy. It was further stated this was putting a burden in the taxpayers' lap without addressing other solutions to address the funding shortfalls in ongoing years.

Martens stated the reality of the budget was there were cuts in the 2026 budget and likely cuts in future budget needs necessitating the ask in the referendum to fund the full cost of the amount needed to fund the firefighter services provided. It was stated the difference between asking for the full amount versus the reduced amount covered by the closure of the TID was small.

McElhaney stated the closure of the TID would be better to assist with future budget shortfalls as the current year's budget had proposed significant cuts to services already. It was further stated asking for the full amount was more transparent when proposals for future service funding cuts are likely.

Motion by Alderperson Neal to amend Resolution 26-0109 to substitute the word "ongoing" in the resolution with "for a period of one year". Motion died due to lack of a second.

Rasmussen stated the quality of service in public safety to the community should not be compromised. It was further stated that the idea of perpetuity is a tough sell to taxpayers and questioned if a time limit should be introduced.

Watson stated the capacity of the community has grown, prompting the need for more firefighters, as those positions had not increased since the 1970s while the city population has grown.

Tierney stated there was a need to be transparent with the community about how much it would

cost to continue the operation of the fire department at its current capacity and have residents make that decision based on the real numbers presented.

Henke stated it would be difficult to hire future firefighters if the ask in the referendum was not on an ongoing basis.

**Motion by Alderperson Henke, seconded by Alderperson Watson, to Call the Question.
Yes 11, No 0, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.**

Martens stated the future fiscal outlook may not support a time limit on an ask in the referendum as the position will be ongoing. It was further stated that the referendum is asking to raise the levy limit ceiling and not the levy amount itself, in that a levy amount under the ceiling could always be an option if future budgets are more positive.

Kilian stated many constituents have stated the cost of property taxes is cost-prohibitive and stated opposition to asking more of the taxpayers.

Griner stated a referendum is the most democratic way of resolving the matter as the question of rising the levy is brought to the residents.

Without objection, a scrivener's error was noted within the resolution and the error will be corrected as part of the approval. The error was in the date of the 2026 Spring Election.

**Motion by Alderperson Watson, seconded by Alderperson Henke, to approve.
Yes - Alderperson Lukens, Alderperson Martens, Alderperson Griner, Alderperson McElhaney, Alderperson Rasmussen, Alderperson Watson, Alderperson Tierney, Alderperson Larson, Alderperson Henke
No - Alderperson Kilian, Alderperson Neal
Abstained - None
Yes 9, No 2, Abstained 0
MOTION PASSED.**

10 Announcement from Mayor and Alderpersons.

The Mayor stated City Hall will be closed Monday in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day for employee in-service and training.

11 Comments and suggestions from citizens present during Public Comment occurring both before and after the business meeting.

1. Tom Kilian, 133 East Thomas Street - spoke on to the GEI presentation.

12 Adjournment.

**Motion by Alderperson Henke, seconded by Alderperson Griner, to adjourn. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 09:08 PM.**

The recording of this meeting may be viewed on
YouTube [@CityofWausauMeetings](https://www.youtube.com/@CityofWausauMeetings)



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