



Agenda

City Council Work Session Meeting
Oelwein City Hall, 20 Second Avenue SW, Oelwein, Iowa
6:30 PM

May 26, 2026
Oelwein, Iowa

Mayor: Brett DeVore

Mayor Pro Tem: Matt Weber

Council Members: Tony Cannon, Anthony Ricchio, Lynda Payne, Jason Gearhart, Renee Cantrell

Pledge of Allegiance

Discussions

- [1.](#) Tear Down Discussion.
- [2.](#) Evaluation Preparation.

Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 319-283-5440



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Dylan Mulfinger, City Administrator
Subject: Demolition Work Session
Date: 5/26/2026

The city has been requested by more than one resident to continue to pursue the demolition of junk properties in town. The city has a steady track record of demolishing properties.

Since 2014 the city has invested \$1,751,394.64 in the demolition of dilapidated properties. Exhibit 5.45657 shows this amount each year.

The city is now moving forward with a budget of \$50,000 each year due to significant budget cuts now and into the future. Sustaining the current tear down level has been difficult especially when the city invested \$96,000 in the teardown of 27 S Frederick and \$110,709.50 for 33 South Frederick.

For the city to demolish every single property that is tagged or should be demolished, the city would need the following:

Estimated tear down cost: \$922,000

Estimated attorney cost: \$92,200

The funding needed for the project would have to be allocated by the city council. Doing this after a budget was just voted on by the city council would be unprecedented. Below are several ideas that the city council could consider. It is critical that these are merely ideas and should not result in a revolt from the community for the mere idea of the city council considering different options.

1. Raise Property Taxes
 - a. The city council would go out for a general obligation bond for the project and raise taxes to pay for the bond. The last \$1,500,000 bond raised the levy \$2.00. This payment would push the city levy to 22.16215. The bond would require a vote of the community.
2. Dismantle the Capital Improvement Program
 - a. Franchise fee revenue for the capital improvement plan is \$225,000 annually.
 - b. The city would need to put off the capital improvement plan for # of years to pay for the project
 - i. A potential local loan could be acquired and paid off in three years
 - c. This will be a detrimental move to all general fund departments
3. Stop Road Improvements
 - a. The city is working to allocate \$300,000 annually with road user tax, franchise fees, and local option sales tax.
4. Eliminate Community Development- \$295,000
 - a. The City Administrator would only demolish buildings as the city acquires them through city hall having time to acquire buildings.
 - b. We would stop enforcing the lawn ordinance



- c. We would stop the rental inspection program
- d. We would eliminate building codes and leave electrical up to the state of Iowa

Should the city council want demolition of dilapidated homes become a larger priority, the city administrator is ready to work in that direction. The city council should anticipate more work sessions to reach a final solution.

		6/30/2014	6/30/2015	6/30/2016	6/30/2017	6/30/2018	6/30/2019
160-5200-64904	JUNK HOUSE REMOVAL	-	5,245.00	86,786.08	24,524.25	44,097.00	13,146.00
160-5200-64903	DOWNTOWN DEMOLITION	77,626.15	158,478.04	-	-	-	-
160-5200-64901	RESIDENTIAL DEMO GRANT	-	1,721.00	9,239.66	7,635.00	3,750.00	6,475.00
302-5030-64950	DEMO CONTRACTS	-	-	-	-	-	-

		6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024	6/30/2025	6/30/2026	Totals
160-5200-64904	JUNK HOUSE REMOVAL	25,829.69	27,980.14	40,026.68	44,732.50	31,043.74	1,187.09	19,894.50	364,492.67
160-5200-64903	DOWNTOWN DEMOLITION	-	-	-	-	-	101,301.25	15,035.00	352,440.44
160-5200-64901	RESIDENTIAL DEMO GRANT	21,041.76	35,984.50	12,400.00	-	2,650.00	24,300.00	5,000.00	130,196.92
302-5030-64950	DEMO CONTRACTS	-	451,050.06	28,100.00	142,054.25	133,844.80	105,657.50	43,558.00	904,264.61
									\$ 1,751,394.64



May 26, 2026

Esteemed City Council Members,

Per your request, this presentation delivers a comprehensive, data-driven framework for the City's upcoming demolition pipeline. It features a forward-looking projection that encompasses City-owned parcels, privately held vacant and placarded blighted buildings, anticipated municipal property acquisitions, and high-impact commercial projects. Crucially, these projections must be evaluated against real-world operational and budgetary constraints, accounting for direct demolition costs, legal fees, staff hours, and individual case management time.

To provide essential context, this forecast is anchored by a retrospective list of previous demolition permits, over 95% having City involved funding, highlighting the City's demolition achievements over the past decade.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
David Kral
Building Official



20 2nd Ave. S.W.
Oelwein, Iowa 50662



buildingadmin@CityofOelwein.org
www.CityofOelwein.org



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FUTURE DEMOLITION PROJECTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Using an average of \$13,000 per residential demolition:

2026 Demolition Project of City Owned Properties:

134 3rd ave NW

310 3rd ave NW

201 2nd st NW

Approx cost **\$39,000.**

Accessory structures that need immediate demolition. Both have structurally collapsed roofs. Both are active code cases:

Garage on 200 block 7th ave SW

Garage on 1000 block 1st ave SE

Approx cost **\$20,000.** These are likely to require court intervention, thus including additional legal fees.

Upcoming tax sale claims for 2027 that are highly likely to be acquired, are economically non-viable, and will need demolished:

5 buildings that are highly likely to be acquired, **4** residential that will require demolition.

Approx cost **\$52,000.** One is a downtown building that is not necessarily needing demolition, but stabilization, thus incurring cost for said work. Approx cost **\$15,000**

There are **18** other addresses on the nuisance tax sale list that have a possibility to be claimed, some may have some viability, most will not. These 18 I expect many may have their taxes paid off in time, however, they will remain problem properties that would require court intervention for conclusion, exacerbating the cost per property to seek resolution. Some of these are also placarded properties. If, by chance, all of those addresses end up in the Cities hands, that's an additional **\$234,000** in demolition costs.

4 separate 657a cases in process with City Attorney. Should finalize by Fall 2025. I expect each of them to close in favor of the City. I have **3** others pending to consider based on budget constraint; budget constraint being legal fees toward pursuing 657a and demolition budget. Approx demolition cost **\$52,000 for 4, \$91,000 for 7.**

46 Vacant Residential Building Licenses in conjunction with 18 Placarded Properties. 22 'Vacant registration requirement code cases' open with failure of owners to register. Out of these 68 different addresses, it is safe to say at least 25% of them are not viable buildings, and would result in demolitions if fully pursued through code enforcement. That would add 17 additional addresses to the demolition list. Another **\$221,000** in demolition cost, not to mention, legal fees.

Major Cost Commercial Downtown buildings:

- 120 South Frederick (City owned)
 - 122 South Frederick (Privately owned)
 - 16 2nd st SW (Privately owned) – this would take court intervention before demolition cost.
- Rough estimate demolition cost **\$150,000-\$250,000**

Add up everything that is highly likely to end up in city custody and need demolition in the near term:

$$\text{\$39000} + \text{\$52000} + \text{\$15000} + \text{\$52000} + \text{\$250000 (120 + 122 South Frederick estimate)}$$

=

\\$408,000

Add everything up for maximum case cost scenario:

$$\text{\$39000} + \text{\$20000} + \text{\$52000} + \text{\$15000} + \text{\$234000} + \text{\$91000} + \text{\$221000} + \text{\$250000}$$

=

\\$922,000

More to consider: New items get added to this list throughout each year. Between: fires, inspection failures, forfeitures, abandonments, code enforcement, and structural failures, multiple new buildings make the list every year.

LOOKING AT THE PAST –
DEMOLITION PERMITS ISSUED HISTORY

2017 Demolition Permits

Column 1	Column 2
101 County Line Rd E	206 S Frederick Ave
114 5th Ave NE	210 3rd Ave NE
116 4th Ave NE	317 1st Ave SE
117 2nd Ave SE	605 4th St SE
124 4th Ave NE	956 S Frederick Ave
1020 South Frederick	2 16th St SE
205 7th Ave SW	

- **Total 2017 Permits : 13**

2018 Demolition Permits

Column 1	Column 2
24 2nd Ave NW	127 1st Ave NW
102 13th Ave SW	613 S Frederick Ave
117 2nd Ave SE	955 1st Ave SE
118 11th Ave SW	1104 W Charles St

- **Total 2018 Permits : 8**

2019 Demolition Permits

Column 1	Column 2
14 7th Ave NE	313 1st Ave SE
33 3rd St NW	422 S Frederick Ave
33 5th St NW	428 4th St SW

122 3rd Ave NW

625 4th Ave SW

310 7th Ave SW

1128 S Frederick Ave

532 6th St NW

1630 S Frederick Ave

- **Total 2019 Permits : 12**

2020 Demolition Permits

Column 1

Column 2

Column 3

6 5th Ave SE

122 3rd Ave NW

321 1st Ave SE

15 4th St NE

122 5th Ave SW

321 1st Ave SE Oelwein NE

16 2nd St SW

124 4th Ave SW

322 4th Ave SE

17 2nd Ave SE

129 5th Ave NE

322 N Frederick Ave

17 5th Ave SE

132 2nd Ave NW

401 7th Ave SW

18 S Frederick Ave

133 3rd Ave SE

503 1st Ave NE

19 1st St NE

138 3rd Ave NW

512 2nd Ave NE

33 3rd St NW	145 2nd Ave NW	513 1st Ave NE
34 5th Ave SE	205 3rd St NW	516 4th St SW
102 2nd Ave NW	217 3rd St NW	524 2nd Ave NW
104 8th Ave SE	219 E Charles St	527 3rd Ave SE
112 2nd Ave NW	219 Lincoln Dr NE	541 4th Ave SE
119 W Charles St	222 5th Ave NE	602 2nd Ave NE
120 3rd St SE	223 E Charles St	608 1st Ave SE
224 9th Ave SW	225 2nd Ave SE	620 3rd Ave SW
723 1st Ave NE	313 4th Ave SE	818 1st Ave NE
723 2nd Ave SW	825 N Frederick Ave	921 2nd Ave NE
933 1st Ave SW		

- **Total 2020 Permits : 52**

2021 Demolition Permits

Column 1	Column 2
15 4th St NE	236 1st Ave SE
15 5th Ave SW	317 2nd Ave NE
23 2nd St NW	317 5th Ave SE
25 3rd St NW	323 1st Ave SE
26 6th Ave NE	402 1st Ave NE
37 4th Ave SE	407 7th St SE
104 8th Ave SW	407 E Charles St
111 5th Ave SE	408 W Charles St
116 2nd Ave NW	412 1st Ave NE
123 5th St NW	500 8th St SW

125 7th Ave NE

511 2nd Ave NE

132 N Frederick Ave

533 5th Ave SE

206 5th Ave NE

544 8th St SW

804 W Charles St

820 3rd Ave SW

820 W Charles St

- **Total 2021 Permits : 29**

2022 Demolition Permits

Column 1

Column 2

15 5th Ave SW

218 3rd Ave NW

19 2nd St SE

407 3rd St SW

22 7th St SW

513 1st St NE

33 S Frederick Ave

517 N Frederick Ave

106 7th Ave SW

531 3rd Ave SE

123 6th Ave NE

702 3rd Ave SW

202 4th St NW

801 5th St SE

217 4th Ave NW

809 E Charles St

- **Total 2022 Permits : 16**

2023 Demolition Permits

Column 1

Column 2

107 9th Ave SE

522 1st Ave NE

118 1st Ave NW

632 5th Ave SW

221 4th St NW

637 5th Ave SW

320 1st Ave NE

700 6th St NW

322 6th Ave SE

721 2nd Ave SE

323 1st Ave SE	721 2nd St NW
420 4 1/2 St SW	902 1st Ave SW
517 E Charles St	910 S Frederick Ave
1126 S Frederick Ave	Oelwein Plaza

- **Total 2023 Permits : 18**

2024 Demolition Permits

Column 1	Column 2
16 2nd St SW	205 2nd St NW
33 5th St NW	208 E Charles St
109 9th Ave SW	411 1st Ave NE
111 5th Ave SW	419 E Charles St
132 6th Ave SE	420 8th St SW
204 8th Ave SW	1132 1st Ave SW

- **Total 2024 Permits: 12**

2025 Demolition Permits

Column 1

Column 2

14 3rd Ave SE

220 6th Ave SW

16 4th St NE

314 1st Ave NE

27 S Frederick Ave

316 1st Ave NE

37 2nd Ave SE

320 1st Ave NE

111 5th Ave SW

407 3rd St SW

132 6th Ave SE

502 E Charles St

201 9th Ave SW

725 2nd Ave SE

204 8th Ave SW

990 S Frederick Ave

209 5th Ave SW

- **Total 2025 Permits : 17**

2026 Demolition Permits

Column 1

Column 2

21 12th St SE

122 7th St SE

1017 1st Ave SE

- **Total 2026 Permits : 3**

Summary: Demolition Permits Issued Per Year

Calendar Year

Total Unique Permits Issued

2017

13

2018

8

2019

12

2020

52

2021

29

10 years NBD

What did we do in 2025-2026?

- Worked with a downtown business owner to save a building, 1 South Frederick
- Worked with the city council to cut expenses to align with depleting revenues
- Awarded \$75,000 in downtown business forgivable TIF loans
- Had an incredible RAGBRAI party
- Demolished a building in the downtown and sold the lot to an adjacent building owner
- Provided a balanced budget
- Received a CDBG grant for \$500,000
- The audit was completed for the city with no substantial findings
- Started a bridge project
- Created videos walking residents through two ballot votes
- Worked on an aggressive on boarding plan for new city council members
- Completed an assessment day for public work employees
- Worked with employees on annual goals
- Negotiated the first housing project in Oelwein in the last five years
- Continued progress on the flood mitigation project ion the northeast
- Certified my creditable city manager status through the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program
- Applied for an Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) wetland grant
- Served as the board chair of the Fayette County Economic Development
- Served as the board chair for OCAD
- Served on the OCAD housing board
- Served on the Iowa League of Cities Board
- Worked on the viaduct project slowly but surely

Community Life

- Raised \$10,000 for Oelwein Rotary Reads

What are we going to do in the future?

- Cut expenses to match future revenue projections
- Water project, funded with cash
- Sewer project, funded with cash
- Flood mitigation project
 - Applied for federal assistance one, denied

- Applying again in 2026
- Finish a bridge and do the next one
- Goal setting
- Work on taking down downtown buildings
- Replace the viaduct
 - Applied for a federal planning grant three times
 - Working on a new federal grant

Why the evaluation matters?

The most important job for the city council is to evaluate the city administrator. This tool is to ensure the council and city administrator are on the same track. The city council should not be afraid to be professionally critical of the city administrator. The city council should always feel comfortable with the City Administrator's performance and should understand the important role the administrator has in the organization.

Not helpful criticism example:

Dylan only likes his own ideas.

Helpful criticism example:

Dylan's inability to help the city council bring their ideas to fruition is discouraging. Sometimes the city council will voice an idea at a meeting, and we do not get any follow up on the matter. One example is the street lighting. We have talked about it a lot, but no follow through with Dylan. This is frustrating as the city council is the policy makers, but we need Dylan to provide the resources and information to make the decisions.

Dylan's next ten years:

- Be highly critical of general fund departments to ensure a balanced budget
- Get the debt service on some sort of track
- Continue to push for ideas that upset the onion cart
- Stay on course for utilities and the improvement plan
- Get creative on delivering city services
- Create a city flag
 - Maybe a city seal for bonus points

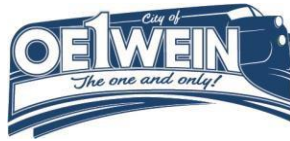
Dylan's Bosses

Mayors

1. Peggy Sherrets
2. Brett DeVore

City Council

1. Ben Weber
2. Kevin Stickel
3. Renee Cantrell
4. Matt Weber
5. Darin Christensen
6. LouAnn Milks
7. Warren Fisk
8. Charles Gerdtts
9. Lynda Payne
10. Matt Derifield
11. Tom Stewart
12. Rex Ericson
13. Karen Seeders
14. Dave Garrigus
15. Dave Lenz
16. Anthony Richhio
17. Tony Cannon
18. Dave Gearhart



City Administrator Evaluation

Dylan Mulfinger (Start Date: April 18, 2016)

2025-2026 Evaluation

Evaluator:	
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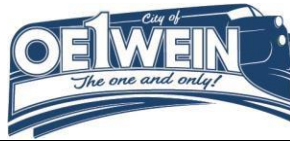
The City of Oelwein provides an evaluation to the City Administrator on an annual basis. This evaluation is critical in ensuring the City Administrator is meeting the expectations of council and the community. The evaluation is also a useful tool as the City Administrator grows in his respective career and role at the City of Oelwein.

Evaluations are provided May 20, 2025 to City Council. Council will have until June 3, 2026 to provide them to Brett DeVore by email. Brett and a small committee will prepare the evaluation for a closed session on June 22, 2025. The Council will review the committees finding with the City Administrator.

Once the evaluation is complete, council will leave closed session and discuss compensation and benefits for the City Administrator starting July 1, 2025. Any changes will be voted on by the council.

Rating Scale Definitions

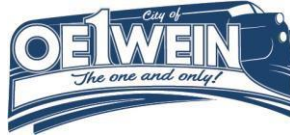
5 points (Pass)	Excellent. Exceptional Mastery. Much more than acceptable.
4 points (Pass)	Very Good. Full Performance Behaviours. Above average.
3 points (Pass)	Good. Acceptable. Satisfactory Average
2 points (Improvement Needed)	Weak. Less than Acceptable
0 – 1 point (Fail)	Unacceptable. Poor. Much less than acceptable



General Comments	
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Notable Positive Performance	
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Performance that needs Improvement	
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Integrity

	Takes conflicts directly to the source and works with council that are having issues
	Performs activities at a high level of morality
	Exhibits composure, appearance and attitude appropriate for executive position

Commitment

	Represents the City in community activities, increasing the City’s visibility and reputation in the community
	Actively involved in community sponsored events
	Participates in relevant education experiences, reading job related literature, keeping up-to-date on new trends and developments, and improving capabilities to meet changing job requirements

Accountability

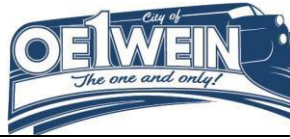
	Effectively adapts behavior and controls emotions under the demands of time, multiple assignments, opposition, new assignments and changing priorities and directions
	Completes requests from council in a timely manner at a level expected of city council

Financial Management

	Prepares a balanced budget to provide services at a level directed by council
	Makes the best possible use of available funds, conscious of the need to operate the local government efficiently and effectively
	Prepares a budget and budgetary recommendations in an intelligent and accessible format
	Ensures actions and decisions reflect an appropriate level of responsibility for financial planning and accountability

Supervisory Skills

	Provides direct guidance of personnel activities which affect the city management team to ensure solid team efforts toward the attainment of department, city, and community goals
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	Evaluates performance of department heads for compliance with established city policies and objectives
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Respect

	Works well with City Council members, board and commission members
	Treats Community Members with respect
	Accurately analyzes his own performance strengths and weaknesses, and accepts constructive feedback

Relations with Elected member of the Governing Body

	Actively works to inform council of issues and events concerning the city
	Carries out directives of the body as a whole as opposed to those of any one member or minority group
	Sets meeting agendas that reflect the guidance of the governing body and avoids unnecessary involvement in administrative actions
	Disseminates complete and accurate information equally to all members in a timely manner
	Assists by facilitating decision making without usurping authority
	Responds well to requests, advice, and constructive criticism

Community Involvement

	Represents the city and provides leadership in key community activities, including business, charitable, civic, and social organizations to maintain a proper Image for the city
	Encourages team involvement with important community, philanthropic and civic events.
	Active in business development activities to establish and enhance business and personal customer relationships.

Overall Results Score

	Final Performance Score out of 130
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