



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, December 01, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Council Chambers - City Hall, 3rd Floor
1717 E. Park Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Council President Stechmesser called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK

Councilmembers: Mark Bittner, Doug Brandt, Shannon Derby, Bill LeClair, Darla LeClair, Tim Petri, Bonnie Shimulunas, Scott Stechmesser, Adam Wachowskiz

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Dawson, Library Director; Terry Ehle, Library Service Coordinator; Mike Mathis, Parks and Recreation Director; Matt Heckenlaible, Public Works Director; Kassie Paider, Finance Director; Dave Murack, Fire Chief; Rick Powell, IT Supervisor; Brian Dellemann, Electric Utility Director; Andrew Sukowaty, Water Utility Director; Jeff Sachse, Community Economic Development Director; Ben Meinnert, Police Chief; Sean Griffin, City Attorney (via phone); and Kyle Kordell, City Manager

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY COUNCIL MEMBER REQUESTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING FROM A REMOTE LOCATION

None.

5. INTRODUCTION OF INVITED GUESTS

A. Oath of Office for Police Sergeant Leander Menn

City Clerk Baryenbruch administered the Oath of Office followed by a badge pinning.

B. Oath of Office for Police Sergeant Brad Dimmick

City Clerk Baryenbruch administered the Oath of Office followed by a badge pinning.

C. Oath of Office for Police Lieutenant Jacob Schweigl

City Clerk Baryenbruch administered the Oath of Office followed by a badge pinning.

D. Connie Hendries, Manitowoc County Democratic Party

City Clerk Baryenbruch administered the Oath of Office followed by a badge pinning.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 25-229 Public Hearing for an Ordinance to Amend Municipal Code Section 10-1-15 I (3), entitled "Height and Area Exceptions" to regulate fence setbacks in the front yard

Summary: The proposed City Code amendment would formally establish a 36-inch setback requirement for fences located in front yards, clarifying where fences may be placed to ensure visibility, safety and consistency across properties in residential zoning districts. Residents are encouraged to attend, learn about the proposed changes, and share feedback before the City Council considers final action.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the ordinance

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by D. LeClair, seconded by B. LeClair.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

B. 25-230 Public Hearing for a Conditional Use Permit for Starbucks located at 1509 Washington Street, for the operation of a drive through, submitted by FrontView REIT (owner)

Summary: A Public Hearing regarding a Conditional Use Permit request for a new owner of the Starbucks at 1509 Washington Street. The applicant, FrontView REIT, is seeking approval to own the restaurant at this location. There is no change in use requested for this property, only a change in ownership.

Recommended Action:

Motion to approve the conditional use permit as recommended by the Plan Commission

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by B. LeClair, seconded by Brandt.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

7. INPUT FROM THE PUBLIC

Stanley Palmer – Spoke in support of a 2% budget increase for the Lester Public Library. He cited the library's national recognition from the Smithsonian Museum for hosting the World on the Move exhibit, noted its smaller staffing levels compared to past years, a state award for creating a children's section, and staff outreach to parks, schools, and other libraries throughout the county.

Lisa Quistorf – Spoke in support of the 2% increase for the Lester Public Library, describing the library as an equalizer that provides essential internet access and programming for the community.

Jim Bob Scoot – Stated that he was denied entry to the Lincoln Park Christmas Light Zoo display in Manitowoc while using his electric scooter. He said the event only allowed automobiles and that he felt discriminated against..

Jeff Dahlke – Expressed concerns about information provided by the City Manager, describing it as incomplete. He urged the Council to rein in the City Manager.

Dawn Boppre (Red Forest Bed and Breakfast) – Asked why Two Rivers does not plow the Mariners Trail while Manitowoc does. She offered to donate an ATV with a plow and stated that a local bike shop owner would plow the trail.

Shawntel Hoffman – Addressed the perpetual cemetery flower fund. She stated she has contacted individuals affected by the City's decision to end the program and noted the financial sacrifices families made to purchase perpetual flowers. She requested additional time to find a solution and stated that crowdfunding the necessary amount requires more than a few months.

Corey Thuss – Expressed concern about budget priorities, questioning the proposed \$520,000 expenditure for a concession stand operating three months per year while ending perpetual

cemetery flowers. She stated both items were added to the agenda without sufficient Council discussion or public input and urged tabling the concession stand project until 2027 and fully funding perpetual flowers in 2026.

Bruce Krueger – Criticized plans for the beach pavilion and emphasized the importance of honoring contractual obligations for perpetual cemetery flowers. He expressed concern about declining population and the lack of well-paying industry jobs to retain young residents.

Kristie Armstrong – Spoke in support of improving the Neshotah Beach concession stand and focusing on tourism. She expressed concern about negative commentary on social media regarding City projects and officials.

Dean Hirvela – Discussed his involvement in researching the perpetual cemetery flowers issue and the community support received. He thanked Council members who reached out to him and stated local florists were informed approximately two months earlier not to plant flowers due to the City's decision. He requested funding for the program to preserve family memories.

Katherine Dahlke – Expressed concern about declining population and the transition away from industry. She noted many homes on her street are seasonal residences and questioned whether tourism generates sufficient revenue to support local businesses. She urged fiscal responsibility.

Patricia Klein – Addressed the need for civility in public discourse, particularly on social media. She shared personal experiences of uncivil treatment following her appointment to the Plan Commission and when questioning bus route changes.

Susan Robitaille – Presented a petition requesting a binding referendum on the concession stand project, stating it had collected over 165 signatures in 24 hours. She asked the Council to fully fund perpetual cemetery flowers for 2026 and to table the concession stand project for a Spring 2026 public vote.

Margaret Lenth – Spoke in support of the perpetual cemetery flower program, citing its historical importance. She questioned the increase in concession stand project costs and expressed concern about beer sales due to liability.

Kathryn Puls – Urged the Council to prioritize essential needs over discretionary projects and to listen to constituents' concerns regarding the concession stand. She emphasized the importance of earning public support for major expenditures.

John Gomez – Spoke about the importance of preserving traditions in Two Rivers and expressed concern that they are being gradually lost.

Michael Bergwin – Advocated for tourism as necessary for the City's future while acknowledging the need to balance tourism, industry, and commerce. He noted the poor condition of many properties he viewed while searching for housing in the area.

Theresa Wagner – Spoke in support of the Lester Public Library, praising staff efforts and stating the library plays an important role in education and community engagement.

Dawn Boppre (Red Forest Bed and Breakfast) – Expressed concern that short-term rentals do not benefit the City as much as year-round residents. She suggested increased promotion of winter sports and tourism to support businesses throughout the year.

Russell Goedjen – Stated that Two Rivers is no longer an industrial town and encouraged the Council to assess current realities, serve retired residents, and determine what tourists actually want.

David Pennefeather – Spoke in support of the 2% library budget increase, sharing that his family formed lasting community relationships through library programs after moving to Two Rivers 15 years ago.

Maryjo Albee – Expressed concern about the loss of City traditions and noted that recreational spaces such as baseball diamonds and tennis courts had been removed. He urged preservation of traditions important to the community

David Drews – Questioned why the Council proposed adding over \$500,000 for the concession stand after previously voting to table action until next year, citing projections of a \$600,000 budget shortfall in 2027.

8. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Letters and other communications from residents

Councilmember Wachowski reported that he had been contacted about the Mariners Trail not being plowed. He explained it was a budget constraint, though the city does plow Raider Trail to the high school. He also noted receiving communications about the budget increase, the concession stand, and in favor of the library.

Councilmember Derby mentioned that the community meal on Thanksgiving served over 100 people at the senior center and was a good opportunity to hear from residents, many of whom supported the library and had questions about the concession stand and flower situation.

Councilmember Stechmesser shared feedback from a resident enrolled in the perpetual flower program who expressed concern about flowers being planted but not maintained, resulting in dead flowers that don't properly honor the deceased

9. COUNCIL REPORTS FROM BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

Councilmember Bittner reported that the Committee on Aging meeting the school district representative reported the district report card grade improved from 56.9 (a 2-star rating) last year to 65 (a 3-star rating) this year.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

A. 25-231 Presentation of Minutes

1. City Council Regular Meeting, November 17, 2025
2. City Council Work Session, November 24, 2025

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the minutes

B. 25-232 Minutes of Meetings

1. Committee on Aging, November 3, 2025
2. Police and Fire Commission, November 25, 2025
3. Business and Industrial Development Committee and Community Development Authority, November 25, 2025

Recommended Action:

Motion to receive and file

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the various actions recommended

Motion carried with a voice vote.

Motion made by Wachowski, seconded by Derby.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

11. CITY COUNCIL - FORMAL ITEMS

A. **25-233 Resolution to Hold a Primary Election on February 17, 2026 if needed for City Office Candidates at the April 7, 2026 Spring Election**

Summary: This resolution authorizes the City to hold a primary election on February 17, 2026, if seven or more candidates file nomination papers for any City office.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the resolution

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Brandt, seconded by B. LeClair.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

B. **25-234 Application of new "Class B" Intoxicating Liquor & Fermented Malt Beverage License, for the Violet Inn LLC, dba Violet Inn Lounge & Spa at 1415 16th Street**

Summary: This item considers approval of an alcohol beverage license application for Violet Inn LLC, a lounge, spa, and small inn located at 1415 16th Street, including appointment of Melissa Nyssen as the licensed agent, with the license period running through June 30, 2026.

Recommended Action:

Motion to approve the application and issue the license

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Wachowski, seconded by Petri.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

C. **25-235 Ordinance to Amend Municipal Code Section 2-1-2 "Division of City Into Wards" to establish a new Polling Place for the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Wards of the City of Two Rivers**

Summary: This ordinance amends Municipal Code Section 2-1-2 to update the legal descriptions of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Wards and to change their combined polling place from Abundant Life Church at 1969 Roosevelt Avenue to the Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum at 1816 10th Street.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the ordinance

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by D. LeClair, seconded by Brandt.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

D. 25-236 Resolution Approving Business Improvement District Levy and Assessment Rate for 2026

Summary: The BID Board held its annual meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2025, to review the 2026 BID Operating Plan, confirm funding commitments to Two Rivers Main Street, and reaffirm the assessment rate at \$1.77 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The Board also scheduled a second meeting for May 2026 to consider an update to the BID boundary map, its first potential change since the district was established in 1996. This review will evaluate whether the current boundaries align with today's business activity and downtown reinvestment goals. Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the resolution, as recommended by the Business Improvement District Board

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by D. LeClair, seconded by Derby.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

E. 25-237 Cemetery Perpetual Care Flowers

Summary: As part of the 2026 Budget, the City has included \$2,700 in property tax funding to help support the cemetery flower program for one final year. To fully cover the 2026 planting costs, an additional \$3,300 will be raised through a community crowdfunding campaign, which the City can launch in December 2025.

Property tax support for 2026 is intended as a transition year, with the expectation that interested residents will organize a citizen-led group to assume long-term responsibility for the perpetual-care flower program beginning in 2027. This group would oversee future fundraising and establish a sustainable flower fund so the program can continue without ongoing City funding. If this is accomplished, the City will commit to planting the flowers each spring perpetually, assuming the flowers will not be purchased with General Fund property taxes.

Staff will assist with the transition planning and initial outreach but will not provide funding beyond 2026.

Recommended Action:

A motion to include \$2,700 in General Fund property taxes for one final year of support for cemetery perpetual care flowers and to direct City Staff to launch a crowdfunding campaign for cemetery flower donations

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Wachowski, seconded by Petri to approve \$6,000 in the 2026 budget to support the flowers for 2026.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

F. 25-238 Resolution Adopting Tax Levy for the City of Two Rivers Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2026

Summary: The proposed Resolution adopts the tax levy for real and personal property included in the 2025 tax rolls for 2026 general city operations, debt service, Lester Public Library, Two Rivers Public Schools, Manitowoc Public Schools, Lakeshore Technical College, and Manitowoc County. The total tax levy adopted by the City is \$5,745,073 which is an increase of 4.05% or \$223,712 from the previous year.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the resolution

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by B. LeClair, seconded by Brandt

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Stechmesser

Voting Nay: Shimulunas, Wachowski

G. 25-239 Resolution Authorizing the Carry Forward of Allowable Prior Year Unused Levy Capacity for Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2026

Summary: This resolution authorizes the use of all allowable prior-year unused levy capacity for levy year 2025. This action requires a two-thirds vote and supports essential municipal operations in the 2026 budget. Approval directs the City Manager and Finance Director to apply the unused levy capacity in the levy limit worksheet and final levy certification.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the resolution

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Bittner seconded by B. LeClair.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

H. 25-240 Resolution Adopting All 2026 Fund Budgets for the City of Two Rivers, Wisconsin Fiscal Year Ending, December 31, 2026

Summary: This Resolution adopts the 2026 General Fund, Debt Service Fund, and all associated special revenue, capital, and enterprise fund budgets, totaling \$41.7 million in appropriations. The resolution also establishes the 2025 BID assessment rate of \$1.77 per \$1,000 of assessed value to support the 2026 Main Street Program budget. Approval of the levy amounts for all taxing jurisdictions is included as part of the overall budget adoption.

Recommended Action:

Motion to waive reading and adopt the resolution

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Bittner, seconded by Brandt.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

I. 25-241 Neshotah Beach Concession Stand - Renovation Project Funding Option

Summary: For several weeks, the City has been considering various levels of renovation for the Neshotah Beach concessions stand, ranging from a bare minimum health department code update to a full demolition and rebuild. Various options presented include different

funding models, project size and scope. The “middle ground” option is a major interior renovation, while retaining the original building footprint and architectural style. The Room Tax Commission, which has statutory control over tax revenue generated by hotel stays, has approved \$75,000 over three years to contribute to the project. In addition, the Room Tax Commission has committed an additional two years of \$25,000 per year (total of \$125,000 over 5 years) if the City is unsuccessful at getting a WEDC Vibrant Spaces grant.

City Staff recommendation is to pursue this “middle ground” option as a balanced approach that will see the actual City tax investment for this project to be an estimated \$130,000, well below any initial projections. This would double restroom capacity, improve the interior of the concession stand, and enhance the rear picnic shelter area into a three-season space. This maintains historical charm, creates individual and family changing rooms, while also increasing much-needed revenue.

Recommended Action:

A motion to direct City Staff to proceed with a Neshotah Beach concession stand major renovation project for 2026, in the total project amount not-to-exceed \$520,000, with the total City borrowing to support the project not-to-exceed \$256,000 and the actual City tax investment not-to-exceed \$131,000 after Room Tax contributions

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Bittner, seconded by D. LeClair.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Stechmesser, Wachowski
Voting Nay: Shimulunas

J. 25-242 Neshotah Beach Concession Stand - Operations Business Plan Options

Summary: City Staff present three operational paths for the Neshotah Beach Concession Stand. Option 1 keeps the current City-run model, generating about \$10,000 annually to fund special events like Bands on the Beach and July 4th Fireworks, but does not support beach maintenance.

Option 2 shifts operations to a private vendor, which historically has produced much less revenue and resulted in inconsistent hours, lower service quality and loss of seasonal jobs, though revenue would benefit the General Fund.

Option 3 creates a shared-revenue model by adding beer sales, expanding the menu and using paid beach parking. Projected revenue is \$31,500, with the first \$10,000 supporting special events and the remainder benefiting the General Fund.

Recommended Action:

A motion to direct City Staff to proceed with option 3 to retain City-run operations at the concession stand with an expanded menu and beer sales, splitting revenue between the Special Events Fund and the General Fund

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by D. LeClair, seconded by Bittner.

Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Stechmesser
Voting Nay: Petri, Shimulunas, Wachowski

12. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Kyle reminded residents that the winter parking ban was in effect, prohibiting street

parking between 1 AM and 9 AM. Police had issued 75 warning citations overnight but would begin issuing actual citations after a two-day warning period.

He also announced that the Two Rivers Hometown Christmas parade had been rescheduled to Saturday, December 6, starting at 5:30 PM.

13. FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- City Council Regular Meeting, Monday, December 15, 2025, 6:00 PM
- City Council Work Session, Monday, December 29, 2025, 6:00 PM

14. CLOSED SESSION

The City Council reserves the right to enter into Closed Session, per Wisc. Stats 19.85(1)(c) considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.

- Performance of management employee

The City Council reserves the right to enter into Closed Session, per Wisc. States 19.85(1)(g) conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved.

- Discussion of potential litigation against a resident(s)

Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Motion made by Derby, seconded by Petri to convene in closed session at 9:05 PM
Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

15. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

To consider possible actions in follow-up to closed session discussions

Motion carried with a voice vote.

Motion made by Wachowski, seconded by Derby to reconvene in open session at 10:04 PM
Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

16. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of this meeting and adjourn this meeting at 10:05 PM.

Motion carried with a voice vote.

Motion made by Wachowski, seconded by Derby
Voting Yea: Bittner, Brandt, Derby, B. LeClair, D. LeClair, Petri, Shimulunas, Stechmesser, Wachowski

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Baryenbruch
City Clerk