222 2nd Street SE
Wadena, MN 56482

Regular City Council Minutes
Tuesday, December 9, 2025

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Comprising a quorum of the City Council, the meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm with the following members present: Mayor George Deiss, Council Members Duke Harrison, Mark Lunde, Wade Miller, and Mac Nelson.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion approving the consent calendar items.

A. Claims Register Summary
B. Monthly Financial Reports
C. City Council Meeting Minutes:
   a. November 12, 2025, Regular Meeting
   b. November 19, 2025, Special Meeting
   c. November 25, 2025, Enterprise Funds Works Session
   d. November 25, 2025, Special Meeting
D. Resolution 2025-53: Authorization to execute MnDOT Airport Maintenance and Operation 2025-2026 Grant Contract
E. Resolution 2025-54: Designating Annual City Elections Polling Place
F. Resolution 2025-55: Appoint Luca Moser to Planning Commission
G. Resolution 2025-56: Renew Mike Pete to Park Board Commission
H. Action 25-72: Accept Dennis Reger's Retirement Resignation
I. Action 25-73: Accept Jayne Koranda's Retirement Resignation
J. Action 25-74: Approve Darin Lorentz to Reserve Firefighter
K. Action 25-75: Approve Liquor, Beer, and Wine Licenses
L. Action 25-76: Approve 3.2 Beer Licenses
M. Action 25-77: Approve Tobacco Licenses
N. Action 25-78: Approve Cannabis Licenses
O. Action 25-79: Approve Tattoo Licenses
P. Action 25-80: Approve Massage Licenses
Q. Action 25-81: Approve Kennel Licenses
R. Action 25-82: Approve Commercial Refuse Licenses
S. Action 25-83: Approve Commercial Salvage License
T. Action 25-84: Approve Taxicab License

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll call vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

PUBLIC HEARING

Truth in Taxation hearing was opened at 6:03pm.

Motion to close the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing at 6:08pm			
No one from the public was present. A short truth in taxation presentation was provided showing a summary of the budget and process.			
Moved by:	Nelson	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 257: Motion approving the 2026 Fee Schedule as presented, second reading.			
Items updated and highlighted since the November first reading were stated.			
Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-57: Motion approving the 2026 Part-Time wages.			
Proposed wages follow previous year's 3% increase and is consistent with the increase provided to full-time employees. Discussion then turned to whether to include a stipend for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Some communities provide stipends because the commission is statutorily required. It was noted that the city has not had difficulty filling the commission positions and that service is generally viewed as a civic duty. Council agreed to exclude Planning and Zoning Commission stipends from the current action and revisit the topic during the next budget cycle if needed.			
Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Harrison
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-58: Motion approving the final 2026 General Fund levy: **General fund operating and GO Bonds levy at $1,501,197, a $98,524 increase from 2025, 7.02%.** **Of the total levy, general fund operating expenses was set at $534,772, a $47,432 increase from 2025, 9.73%.** **Mill rate set at $.1250 per $1,000 taxable market value.**			
There were no changes since September's proposed budget.			
Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-59: Motion approving General and Enterprise Fund budgets for fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026, and ending December 31, 2026, all funds combined.			
Budgets are presented reflecting work session discussions and adjustments One exception is an ad-hoc meeting with Council Member Harrison, Administrator Schroeder, Finance Director Poling, and Liquor Store Manager Booth held following the work session. The Liquor Store budget presented reflects decreases to the salaries line items with Administrator Schroeder directing Booth to reduce weekly staffing hours to 350, resulting in an approximate $10,000 reduction. Credit card expense projections were conservatively reduced due to uncertainty of allowable debit card fees being passed on to customers.			
Moved by:	Miller	Seconded by:	Lunde
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-60: Motion approving certification of 2026 miscellaneous unpaid accounts receivables to property taxes.

Each year the city encounters unpaid accounts receivables. State law allows municipalities to assess debts to the property. A $50 administration fee is also added. The list of these assessments was provided, with private data and parcel numbers redacted to maintain privacy.

Moved by:	Miller	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-61: Motion approving to close the Airport operational activity in the General Fund and the creation of a separate Airport Special Revenue Fund effective calendar year 2026.

The establishment of a distinct special revenue fund will enhance accountability, provide clearer insight into airport finances, and ensure that revenue generated from airport is directly reinvested into airport-related expenses and improvements.
Current annual airport operating and capital outlay amounts will continue to be budgeted through the General Fund, transferring appropriate amounts to support the special revenue fund. The change will not impact airport operations or staffing.

Moved by:	Harrison	Seconded by:	Lunde
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Action 25-85: Motion approving WDA and P&Z Director Dean Uselman remote work leave request.

WDA Director Dean Uselman made a request to the council at September's budget work session to work remotely out-of-state for approximately six weeks in January and February. The agreement is to work 20 hours per week with the remaining hours utilizing vacation leave to fulfill full-time status. He agreed to remain available throughout the day by phone, email, text, as well as remote in by Zoom to participate in City meetings. Response time to council, staff, and client needs will continue throughout the day.
The leave timeframe is during the slower period for planning and zoning activity, and essential work can be handled remotely without impacting operations. Should there be work requiring him to report back to the city, all expenses would be at his personal expense.
The council clarified that this arrangement can apply to this type of position in the city and does not establish a precedent for all other positions.

Moved by:	Harrison	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Action 25-86: Motion approving FT Wastewater/Sewer Maintenance Worker, Class D job description upgrade to grade 5 and addition of GIS mapping duties and approve advertising the position internally.

An opportunity to update the job description presented itself following an employee retirement. The proposed changes add oversight of the city's GIS mapping system in anticipation of a 2026 transition to in-house management.
The grade 4 to 5 recommendation includes aligning the Class D licensure and grade with the Water Operator, Class D position in the water department currently on grade 5. This position will include more duties and a class D licensure that warrants a grade higher.
Another change is requiring a Class D operator license during the time of application. However, if a candidate is hired without the license, a hire may be made at Grade 4 and advance to Grade 5 upon obtaining the license after one year.

Public Works Director Kovar is aware of an internal candidate for the position. The candidate currently holds a Class B license. Internal advertising will be completed. If there is no internal application, then external advertising will be completed with a candidate brought to the January meeting.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Action 25-86: Motion approving FT Billing Clerk/Energy Coordinator position advertising and training.

Jayne Koranda provided her retirement notice effective March 2026. Due to the complexity of the role and the importance of maintaining uninterrupted billing operations, Utility Superintendent Dave Evans discussed the need to begin recruitment, recommending a new employee training period for two full billing cycles, approximately six to ten weeks.

To meet this timeline, the goal is to have a candidate start by the last week of January, allowing February and March billing to be completed before the retirement. Staff noted that the timeline is tight due to holidays, interview scheduling, and notice periods, and requested authorization to begin advertising immediately.

The position will be posted externally; however internal candidates are eligible to apply.

Moved by:	Nelson	Seconded by:	Harrison
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 5:39 pm

Elliott Green from FCCLA at Wadena Deer Creek School requests to put on a Wolverine Plunge event to be held at the Wadena bus loop. He is seeking assistance in obtaining a containment tank/pool to use for the event. The council tossed around ideas with a couple members offering to connect him with some leads.

Jim Stoneman spoke about his property valuations. The council informed him that discussions for valuations occurs in April, and that valuations are set by the county assessor. The current Truth in Taxation meeting is set to discuss the 2026 city budget levy. The council encouraged Jim to reach out to the county assessor for more information and attend the local board of review meeting in April.

Tracy Stoneman was also in attendance and followed up on a row of bushes that died on her property. She believes the city is responsible for damage during the Greenwood Ave utilities project. Also sharing frustration at how long the process has taken for the city to make it right. Administrator Schroeder explained she had a conversation with Jim (Stoneman, husband) this past summer; stating that the city will replace three bushes. Utility Director Evans asked her to provide the variety she wants, and that they will get replaced in the spring.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar

- Noted the cold temps is not allowing the sand to stick to the roads.

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- Crews are busy placing primary wire at Pinewood Estates Addition.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- Planning and Zoning permits have reduced for the season.
- Enough lots have been sold in Pinewood Estates to cover the first debt service reimbursement payment to the electric utility.

Police Department – Naomi Plautz

- Shop with a Hero event has been postponed to Thursday, January 18 due to weather.

- Parade of Lights was well attended and ran smoothly.
- Requests to schedule a future council meeting presentation of a Drug Task Force case. The presentation would include a local case and provide insight into the task force's operations.
- Will talk to MnDOT regarding flashing stop signs at the intersection by the elementary school.

Fire Department – Cody Yglesias

- Stated that fire prevention has been working well, not experiencing many fire calls.
- Primary work is carbon monoxide detectors, and continuing trainings.
- Will look to hire a replacement for the approved reserve firefighter.

Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth

- Reports that THC beverage sales are continuing to grow, but still a small percentage of overall sales.

Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson – Nothing to add.
Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross – Not present
City Administrator – Kim Schroeder – Nothing to report.

COUNCIL REPORTS
Duke Harrison: Nothing to report or add.
Mark Lunde: Nothing to report or add.
Mac Nelson: Nothing to report or add.
Wade Miller: Nothing to report or add.
Mayor George Deiss: Presented a letter to the council on behalf of Minnesota mayors, addressed to the State of Minnesota, highlighting cities' concerns about mandates and pressures that contribute to increased levies. No one expressed opposition.

Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 6:20pm.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote in favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: Kim Schroeder
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator