

Regular City Council Minutes Tuesday, August 11, 2026

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 council members present: Mayor George Deiss, Council Members Duke Harrison, Mark Lunde, Wade Miller, and Mac Nelson.

Staff present: City Administrator Kim Schroeder, WDA Director Dean Uselman, Public Works Director Dan Kovar, Utilities Director Dave Evans, Liquor Store Manager Tim Booth, Wellness Director Lisa Anderson, and Bolton & Menk Engineers Phil Martin and Mac Groutman.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion approving the consent calendar items.

- A. Claims Register Summary
- B. Monthly Financial Reports
- C. City Council Meeting Minutes:
 - a. July 14, 2026, Regular Meeting
- D. Resolution 2026-29: Library Board, Mayor Appointment of Katie Anderson
- E. Resolution 2026-30: Accepting Donations and Grants through July 31, 2026
- F. Action 26-62: Temporary Liquor License, Wadena Ag Society, August 22
- G. Action 26-63: Salsa Fest, Request to Close Aldrich Ave, September 17-18

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

OLD BUSINESS

Action 26-40: Motion to table the highway 10/71 digital sign to December 31, 2026.

Council member Nelson reports that collaboration is going well. The primary remaining need is to obtain ownership of the property or secure necessary permitting. The group requests an extension to the end of 2026 to allow additional time to develop a concrete plan.

A potential change to the sign design is still being evaluated with no updated details.

The city submitted a formal appraisal request to the state and waiting for purchase options. While a sign permit is relatively inexpensive, the Partners would like additional space for beautification.

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

Action 26-58: Motion to table social media facebook comments decision to the September council meeting and pose the question to the League of MN Cities in a format that allows for a more open dialogue response.

Discussion include allowing comments on engagement or question-based posts while turning them off for informational posts. Members also agreed that inappropriate, threatening, or

potentially terroristic content should continue to be addressed under the city's social media policy. There was uncertainty about how the question was framed along with the League of Minnesota Cities' guidance applies. The council asked to seek additional clarification

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

NEW BUSINESS

Luther Nervig updated the City Council regarding designation of the Park Board to oversee the Peterson Foundation grants and donations to the City.

Luther Nervig provided an update on philanthropic accounts he manages. The Wadena Parks Foundation was established in 1977 and originally funded with a \$200,000 donation professionally managed by the Minnesota Community Foundation. The foundation has since provided approximately \$301,750 in grants to the city while additionally growing its assets to \$374,000. Current grants include funding for flowers at BN Park, the pickleball courts, and the softball complex roof.

The foundation's leadership is now proposing to transfer oversight to the Wadena Park Board while keeping the funds independent from the city. The Minnesota Community Foundation controls the annual distribution, currently around 5%, which protects the principal and prevents the funds from being used for a single large project.

The discussion also highlighted the separate Peterson Foundation, which has provided significant funding for broader community and city projects. Together, the foundations demonstrate the long-term impact of private donations supporting Wadena park areas. As part of the transition, the Parks Foundation and Park Board will work with the Minnesota Community Foundation on the necessary documentation, including a successor plan in case the Park Board ever dissolves or is unable to continue overseeing the funds. The goal is to ensure the foundation remains independent from the city and continues to benefit Wadena for generations.

Action 26-64: Motion denying Jonathan Korfe a variance for adjustment to parcel R220053350 and complying with current ordinances for a minimum 24' to maximum 30' drive over curb entrance and 20' away from any other accesses.

Jonathan Korfe requests a drive over curb the full length of the north side of his newly constructed commercial building at 225 Birch Ave NE, allowing vehicles to park directly adjacent to the building.

Council members expressed concerns, particularly regarding pedestrian and traffic safety and stormwater drainage. The consensus was a more limited drive-over section consistent with the city's requirements for a two-way entrance, while using a traditional curb along the remainder of the property.

Sunnybrook Road on the south side of his building is recently turned back to the city from the county. There will be a vacating public hearing at the September 2026 regular meeting for the city council to consider vacation of the road to the adjacent property owners. If vacating is approved, Korfe's property will gain additional parking area reducing the need for the full length of drive-over curb.

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

Action 26-65: Motion approving Bolton & Menk to provide a cost proposal and facility plan for the SW Infrastructure and Wastewater plant

Bolton & Menk provided a presentational overview of the city's wastewater system and the need to begin planning for major improvements. The wastewater treatment plant has several components that are at or beyond their expected useful life, including electrical systems, biological treatment equipment, settling mechanisms, and filtration equipment. Key concerns include aging and obsolete equipment, lack of redundancy for maintenance, regulatory requirements, and the need to prepare for potential future changes to discharge limits and biosolids.

Additionally, the southwest portion of the city has been identified as the next major area for infrastructure improvements. The goal is to coordinate utilities and street project infrastructure to maximize efficiency and funding opportunities through the state's Public Facilities Authority (PFA) program.

The city needs an approved wastewater facility plan before it can pursue state PFA funding opportunities. The plan identifies improvements over the next 20 years allowing the city to develop shelf ready projects positioned to take advantage of grants, low interest loans, and other funding opportunities when available.

Bolton & Menk estimates the facility plan cost at approximately \$60,000–\$80,000. Design costs for the treatment plant would be developed as the project scope and construction estimates become clearer. The city has already incorporated funding for these future improvements into its long-term water and wastewater forecasted rate planning.

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

Action 26-66: Motion awarding the pickleball court project to Kern & Tabery for a total of \$116,831.06.

The city received two bids, Kern & Tabery and Anderson Brothers Construction Company. The lowest bid is Kern and Tabery Inc., \$108,703.16 including the windscreen and black vinyl-coated fencing at \$8,127.90 for an overall total of \$116,831.06.

An additional request was received for interior fencing to divide the four courts into separate playing areas, including two gates. The additional cost is \$8,127.90.

The project originally had \$90,500 in secured fundraising. The primary donor has agreed to provide the additional funding to cover all project costs with no costs to the city.

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

Action 26-67: Motion approving the Request For Proposals (RFP) for Realtor Services for city owned land.

The process will market and sell available city-owned properties. The Wadena Economic Development may add or remove parcels from the recommendation, since several of the properties are owned by the Development Authority. The RFP will allow realtors to submit proposals outlining their services and commission or fees for completed property sales.

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

Action 26-68: Motion approving a sourcewell grant for a part-time \$15 per hour, up to 640 hour temporary intern to digitize documents into Laserfiche. Along with a newly created job description and ability to advertise and hire.

Sourcewell will only provide reimbursement for actual hours worked. Internships cannot exceed 32 weeks for students currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution or cannot exceed 16 weeks for recent graduates of a post-secondary institution.

The job description include strong emphasis on a confidentiality employee.

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

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 5:50 pm No one present

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar

Utilities Department – Superintendent David Evans

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

Police Department – Naomi Plautz – Nothing to add

Fire Department – Cody Yglesias Fire Chief

Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth Nothing to add

Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson Nothing to add

Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross - Not present

City Administrator – Kim Schroeder

- Paving on Highway 75 is expected to be completed by August 21, while the mill and overlay work on Highways 29 is scheduled for August 28–31, weather permitting. Staff has informed the school that the work may extend into the start of the school year, although the contractor is hoping to complete it before then.
- Seeding along Highways 29 and 71 has not seeded as well as expected due to weather conditions. Additional watering has been ordered. If the grass does not seed adequately this fall, the contractor will return in the spring.
- Street lighting at Colfax and Highways 71/29 may be out for up to 30 days. The construction crew will notify businesses about the project schedule.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Duke Harrison: Nothing to add.

Mark Lunde: Nothing to add.

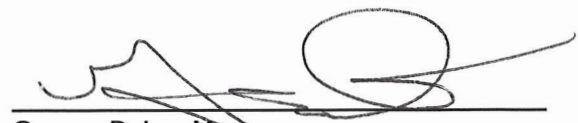
Mac Nelson: Nothing to add

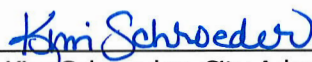
Wade Miller: Nothing to add.

Mayor George Deiss: Nothing to add.

Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 5:53 pm.

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


George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: 
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator