222 2nd Street SE
Wadena, MN 56482

Regular City Council Minutes
Tuesday, October 14, 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, and Wade Miller. Mac Nelson arrived at 5:07 pm.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion approving the consent calendar items.

A. Claims Register Summary
B. Monthly Financial Reports
C. City Council Meeting Minutes:
   a. September 9, 2025, Regular Meeting
   b. September 22, 2025, Work Session Meeting
   c. September 23, 2025, Special Meeting
D. Action 25-64: Chamber of Commerce, Request to Close Aldrich Ave
E. Resolution 2025-47: Mayor's Appointment of Renee Frethem to the HRA Board

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to close the public hearing at 5:03 pm.

No one present in opposition. Jim Merickel was present in support.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-39: Motion approving the addition of Moreton Capital, LLC as a designated official depository.

Moreton Capital is an investment broker providing tailored investment recommendations allowing city staff to make final decisions and helping city revenues with no management or investment fees. Currently, Wadena uses BPS capital a large majority of the city's funds are invested; their fees are 0.10%. The new broker can result in notable savings to the City and allow for more diversified investments. The library funds will remain with Schwab per prior Friends of the Library memorandums of understanding.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-41: Motion approving a WDA Mandatory Tax levy at .01813%.			
WDA Director Dean Uselman states this has been levied for ten years for economic purposes. Dollars are used for property acquisition, usually offsetting the cost of land purchases, most recently used for costs associated with Pinewood Estates Development.			
Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-42: Motion approving a WDA Discretionary Tax levy at .00282%.			
Dean Uselman proposed a 2024 discretionary tax levy rate of .00282% of the estimated market value. This helps WDA increase revenue to purchase and improve properties for economic development.			
Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 2025-43: Motion approving an HRA Tax levy at .0144%.			
HRA Director Maria Marthaler stated they use the levy proceeds to fund affordable housing projects, the community house program, and new ideas for home improvement loans.			
Moved by:	Miller	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 25-44: Motion setting the public hearing date for the Highway 10 Utilities Improvement Project proposed assessments.			
City Engineer Phil Martin was present to go over the cost breakdown. The project funding includes a $5 million state legislative Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) appropriation originally awarded to address contamination along the Highway 10 corridor. Approximately $2.1 million of those funds remain, and legislative action extended the use period to use towards this phase of the project. There was less soil contamination than expected; the City anticipates using about $1.895 million. The remaining costs of the project will be assessed in accordance with the City's existing policy, which targets approx. 21% of total project costs to benefiting properties. Martin also noted the final assessments reflect significant reductions from preliminary estimates due to LRIP funding reimbursements. The public hearing allows property owners to review their individual assessments and provide feedback.			
Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 25-45: Motion setting the public hearing date for the Highway 71 Utilities Improvement Project proposed assessments.			
City Engineer Phil Martin was present to go over the cost breakdown. Cost of the project will be assess in accordance with the City's existing policy, which targets approx. 21% of total project costs to benefiting properties. The public hearing allows property owners to review their individual assessments and provide feedback.			
Moved by:	Nelson	Seconded by:	Harrison
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Resolution 25-46: Motion approving the City to apply for a Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) loan on behalf of Mason Brothers.

Authorizes submitting the application as part of the required process.

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

Action 25-65: Motion approving a tax abatement to Jim Merickel at 832 6th St SW for a maximum of $20,000 over a ten year period.

Applicant Jim Merickel requests tax abatement assistance for a housing development project adding two new duplex units within city limits. He noted significant private investment in preparing the lot and asking for City participation to support local housing growth. The project received a moderate qualifying score from the City's review committee, making it eligible for abatement.

Staff and council members discussed the housing shortage in Wadena, emphasizing the need for more housing options to attract and retain workers, students, and retirees. It was noted that the county recently approved a five-year, $15,000 tax abatement for the project and expressed strong support for local housing development.

Council also discussed how to improve the City's overall tax abatement program—potentially simplifying the application, reducing the $750 fee, and aligning with the county's one-page process.

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

Action 25-66: Motion approving SEH architect/engineering agreement for Snow Removal Equipment (SRE) building construction.

Airport main hangar tenant Sean Barron continues to expand operations and equipment needs, resulting in limited available space in the existing hangar. To address this, plans were discussed for constructing a new 40'x40' snow equipment hangar which allows the City to continue leasing the current building, while adding new capacity.

The proposed engineering cost for the new hangar is $87,000, with 95% funded by the FAA, 2.5% funded by the state, and the City cost share at 2.5%, or $2,180.

The construction phase will be under a separate grant proposal once engineering plans are complete.

Council members discussed funding splits between federal and state participation as well as long-term benefits to the airport and future higher rental income potential. It was emphasized that even if the project did not move forward beyond engineering, the City's out-of-pocket cost would be minimal relative to the potential lease revenue return.

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

Action 25-67: Motion approving to change credit card processing from Tyler Technologies to InvoiceCloud.

InvoiceCloud offers a more modern, user-friendly interface for utility customers, featuring improved online access, paperless billing, payment reminders, Apple Pay and Google Pay compatibility, text and email notifications, and enhanced customer communication options. Customers would have the ability to update account information, set up autopay, and manage billing preferences more easily than with the current Tyler Technologies system.

It was noted that the customer fee for eligible card transactions would increase from 2% to 3%, which is consistent with other utilities fees.
Additionally, unlike the current system, the City would no longer pay an additional interchange fee, averaging $2,300 per month, resulting in overall cost savings to the City. InvoiceCloud also charges a flat $200 monthly fee and $0.15 per electronic statement, which council and staff noted would additionally result in a net annual savings and efficiency.

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

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 6:07PM No one present.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar

- Dan noted the parks and campground have been closed for the season.

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- Missouri River Energy area meeting is October 22 if anyone is interested in going, let him know.
- The electric crew has a full schedule the rest of the 2025 season with the highway projects lighting, Pinewood addition, Roach's development, Homestead services, duplexes, and a 4-plex.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- Approved a loan for a new downtown business.
- Closed on three lots in Pinewood Estates for the construction of a new four-plex.
- Noted Planning Commission Chair Tom Endure passed away. The commission is back to one less member.

Police Department – Naomi Plautz Nothing to report or add.
Fire Department – Cody Yglesias Not Present.
Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth Not Present
Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson Nothing to report.
Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross Not Present.
City Administrator – Kim Schroeder Nothing to report.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Duke Harrison:

- Would like to see the city look into connecting some of the walking/ biking trails around town.

Mark Lunde: Nothing to report or add.

Mac Nelson:

- Would like to address the special vehicle policy and misuse of the ordinance. Scooters have been seen going 40 mph on Hwy 10 as well as kids on ATV's on 2nd St with no lights.

Wade Miller:

- Worked with Sarah Browne to determine mural locations discussed at a previous meeting.

Mayor George Deiss:

- Provided background that shortly after taking office, a similar tax abatement request had come before the council from Merickel's with Merickel stating he couldn't afford to build without the abatement. At that time, he lost eligibility for the abatement due to timing. Despite being denied, the applicant proceeded with construction, demonstrating that development can still occur without assistance. Other council members clarified that the current request is not about favoring a single developer but rather about supporting community redevelopment and housing growth. It was acknowledged that public debate and differing opinions are healthy, and that council members must also represent constituents who have expressed opposition to the proposal.

Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 6:25pm.

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

George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: Kim Schroeder
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator