



**Regular City Council Minutes
Tuesday, February 10, 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 members present: Mayor George Deiss, Council Members Wade Miller and Mac Nelson. Duke Harrison and Mark Lunde were absent.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion approving the consent calendar items.

- A. Claims Register Summary
- B. Monthly Financial Reports
- C. City Council Meeting Minutes:
 - a. January 13, 2026, Regular Meeting
- D. Resolution 2026-14: Wadena Firemen Relief Assn, Gambling Site Permit, Drastic Measures
- E. Resolution 2026-15: Wadena Firemen Relief Assn, Gambling Site Permit, The Uptown
- F. Action 26-07: Temporary Tattoo License for Downtown Ink
- G. Action 26-16: Temporary On-Sale Liquor License for Wadena Elks

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

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance 258: Motion approving the 2026 Fee Schedule amendments to public works and wastewater rates.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 259: First reading of ordinance 259 to amend city code, Chapter 71 Parking Regulations, 71.09 Parking Hours.

The police department identified that the ordinance doesn't address vehicles occupying municipally owned parking lots for lengths of time, without valid tabs or insurance. The proposed ordinance update provides enforcement authority in municipally owned lots.

Resolution 2026-16: Motion to table the increase to benefit level for Fire Relief Association Firefighter plan.

This item was tabled until March's regular meeting to allow for full council decision.

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

Action 26-08: No action taken on Alfred Kramer, sidewalk snow removal dispute.

Resident Alfred Kramer expressed concern that he does not think he should be required to remove snow from his sidewalk, disputing the assessment on his property for snow removal. Council and staff explained that the ordinance is the same for all residents requiring snow removal within 24 hours. When not done the public works dept. cleans and invoices the property owner. If not paid at year end, the city follows MN Statutes allowing assessment to the property. Kramer stated he won't pay that portion of the tax statement. Council and staff told Kramer he will have to dispute that with the county and court system.

Action 26-09: Motion approving City of Wadena and Wadena County Economic Alliance collaborated payroll administration efforts for executive director.

Wadena County Economic Alliance President Ray Ludovissie was present as a preliminary step to determine the council's interest to consider a mutually agreed administration of payroll service through the City's finances for the Alliance's executive director. Astera Health was administering and has declined to continue effective December 31, 2025.

Some of the challenges identified that need to be addressed are human resource items such as PERA retirement requirement, or who would be responsible for workers compensation, MN leave programs, etc.

The Alliance is financially stable to fund wages. The board will remain responsible for supervision and operations, with the City serving as payroll processor only.

The Alliance will consult with legal counsel to develop a legal agreement outlining liability and responsibilities for the collaboration.

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

Action 26-10: Motion approving to hire Terry Wendt for the Wastewater Maintenance Worker position, Grade 4, Step 2, 6-month probation, 40 hours of vacation fronted at start of employment, effective March 9, 2026.

20 applications were received with (5) scoring the minimum for interviews.

Staff recommends hiring Terry Wendt. Wendt currently works at Heartland Tire with approx. 10 years of Master Plumbing experience prior to Heartland Tire.

Staff recommended hiring Terry Went at Grade 4, Step 2, with one week of front-loaded vacation time, which he has accepted. It was also noted for the record that Mr. Went brings years of experience, including a master plumber background (license currently expired).

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

Action 26-11: Motion approving to contract with Triple S Tree Service at \$1.25/inch for both standing and tipped stumps.

Six quotes received. Quotes are for a 22-month period starting March 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027. Triple S was the lowest bidder with the same rate as the last period, also noting that Triple S has held the City's previous two contracts and does a great job.

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

Action 26-12: Motion to table consideration of a wage adjustment for Assistant to the Administrator position until the March regular meeting.

Two council members were absent, with one of the members on the personnel committee. It was decided to wait until the other members were present.

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

Action 26-13: Motion approving to award Niagra Power Transformer the contract to furnish an upgrade to the North Substation Transformer totaling \$1,419,820.

Three bids were received on time; one was submitted late and not included. The low bid was Niagra Power Transformer at \$1,419,820, slightly below the engineer's estimate of \$1.5 million. The top bid was \$2,295,400. The city has worked with Niagra Power Transformer in the past with recommendation to contract with the company again.

Procurement of the transformer is the first major step. The purchase will be paid in installments over the course of design and manufacturing; 20% down payment, 30% when drawings are approved, 30% when materials are delivered, and 20% at construction. The projected delivery timeline is three years. Standard practice is a 5% retainage of payments until the project is complete and transformer is fully operational.

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

Action 26-14: Motion approving to purchase a 2026 Ford Plug-In Hybrid vehicle from Morrie's Auto Group for \$33,777.00 plus tax and license fees.

Funding for a hybrid vehicle has been budgeted the past two years up to \$60,000.

Three quotes were received, the lowest from Morrie's Auto Group, the other two from Sourcewell contract pricing, all for 2025 Ford Escapes.

One Sourcewell bid was approx. \$5,000 lower, however, it sold before the meeting, and notably a 2025 model. The 2026 vehicle is better equipped and currently available in stock. Vinyl striping and a wrap will be added to promote carbon free city and other messaging.

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

Action 26-15: Motion approving to continue with a Sunnybrook Park, drive through Christmas in the Park idea with sponsorship and project costs paid for from the Electric fund.

The concept was introduced to add to the already established Christmas themes within the city, attract visitors, and increase seasonal traffic.

To get a project off the ground like this would not work for the 2026 season. Instead the project timeline is 2027 to allow adequate planning. The proposal would include designated areas for groups or individuals to sponsor and decorate displays.

For proper electrical availability, an estimated initial electrical infrastructure cost of approximately \$18,500 is necessary for peds and related equipment.

Discussion highlighted the need for oversight, including possible display approval guidelines and involvement or creation of a board, or an outside organization such as the Parks Board or a community group to manage logistics and content.

Council members were supportive, directing to further research similar models in other communities, gather additional information, and continue to report back with more details.

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

Action 26-17: Motion approving acceptance of Mn Dept of Health \$1,000,000 Water Lead Service Line Replacement grant, hire Bolton & Menk for professional services estimated at \$47,700 and moving forward with a project to replace service lines.

The grant provides replacement for private water services containing lead or galvanized pipes. The original application focused on the northeast section of town, to date 59 services have been identified. DOH provided a larger grant to allow citywide expansion.

Due to grant compliance requirements, including Buy America, Build America provisions, and prevailing wage regulations, approval to hire Bolton & Menk estimated at \$47,000 is recommended to assist with program development, compliance, contracting certified plumbers, and project oversight to maximize the number of services replaced, along with minimize homeowner cost participation.

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

Action 26-18: Motion approving an Outdoor AED-Naloxone Public Access Safety Cabinet located at The Depot and BN Park.

Wadena County Opioid Settlement committee has funds available for the distribution of opioid money. Power to Save a Life Inc. Advocates for Health is a nonprofit organization that installs heated outdoor cabinets throughout MN containing Narcan and an AED unit.

The proposed location is The Depot and BN Park for a centrally located area and hosts many community events. The unit requires electrical service and coordination with electric for installation. The grant covers the cabinet, equipment, installation, and four years of service. Once service period ends, ongoing tracking and monitoring is approximately \$50 per month. It was recommended to reach out to a local business or non-profit organization to sponsor.

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

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 5:40pm. No one present.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar – Nothing to add

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- Noted that crews are working at the Hwy 10 roundabout to finalize moving equipment.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- Continues communicating with clients and agencies, regarding the childcare grant and the Becker property options by Walmart.

Police Department – Naomi Plautz

- Noted assistance in a large theft case that Wadena Police helped bring to conclusion.

Fire Department – Cody Yglesias - Not present

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

- Gave an update that JH Signs provided a design and quote for the Hwy 10/71 digital community monument sign.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Duke Harrison: Not present.

Mark Lunde: Not present.

Mac Nelson: Nothing to report or add.

Wade Miller: Nothing to report or add.

Mayor George Deiss: Nothing to report or add.

DRUG & VIOLENT CRIME TASK FORCE PRESENTATION

Jake Maros, a 12-year drug task force agent with the Wadena County Sheriff's Office, presented a 2023 drug investigation started by a local fatal overdose from fentanyl-laced meth. Using cell phone data, GPS tracking, undercover buys, and coordination with local, state, and federal agencies, investigators traced the drugs through local dealers to metro-area suppliers. The investigation led to multiple large seizures of meth and heroin valued near \$1 million. The case illustrates how accidental overdoses can expose extensive drug networks when combined with modern investigative techniques.

Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 6:36pm.

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



George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: 

Kim Schroeder, City Administrator