

LAUDERDALE CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Lauderdale City Hall  
1891 Walnut Street  
Lauderdale, MN 55113

Page 1 of 3

February 24, 2026

**Call to Order**

Mayor Gaasch called the Regular City Council meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Councilors present: Sharon Kelly, Evan Sayre, Duane Pulford, and Mayor Mary Gaasch.

Councilors absent: Jeff Dains.

Staff present: Heather Butkowski, City Administrator; and Miles Cline, Deputy City Clerk.

**Approvals**

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were any additions to the meeting agenda. There being none, Councilor Pulford moved and seconded by Councilor Kelly to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were corrections to the minutes of the February 10, 2026, City Council meeting. There being none, Councilor Pulford moved and seconded by Councilor Kelly to approve the February 10, 2026, City Council meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were any questions on the claims. There being none, Councilor Kelly moved and seconded by Councilor Sayre to approve the claims totaling \$30,447.56. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion/Action Item**

A. Resolution No. 022426A – Authorizing Transfer of Funds from Fund 226 Communications Fund and Closing the Account

Butkowski explained that Fund 226 was created to track franchise fees paid by Comcast. About 25% of the revenue received is remitted to the cable commission that the City is a member of. The commission uses the funds to support the cable access channel and their lead role in negotiating the franchise renewals. The remaining funds pay for costs related to recording City meetings and broadcasting them on the City's cable access channel and the internet.

Over the past few years, the Council has discussed the future of Fund 226. The discussions have been around declining revenue due to the loss of traditional cable subscriptions with the increase in cable-like services delivered through the internet. The Council made a couple of decisions to prop up the fund. First, the City allocated \$50,000 from the federal Covid dollars to the fund. This was intended to provide a 3 to 5-year backstop on the declining revenue and pay for costs associated with making virtual council meetings possible.

Starting in 2025, the Council no longer used franchise fees to cover a portion of staff time. The fund had historically paid for some staff time as staff were responsible for the recording and

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Page 2 of 3

February 24, 2026

airing of city council meetings. Those costs were transferred to the general fund. For budget year 2026, funds were not budgeted and new accounts were created in the general fund to track cable franchise revenue and expenses with the intent to close the fund.

With the audit completed, the fund can be closed. Future franchise fees and cable expenses would be paid out of the general fund. To the extent the franchise fees don't cover expenses, other general fund revenue would pay the difference.

Councilor Sayre made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 022426A – Authorizing Transfer of Funds from Fund 226 Communications Fund and Closing the Account. This was seconded by Councilor Kelly and carried unanimously.

Councilor Dains joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

#### B. Community Communications Opportunities

On the heels of the LMC's Experienced Elected Officials Conference, Mayor Gaasch shared what some other cities are doing to encourage community engagement. One of the ideas she proposed is a monthly or quarterly get-together with citizens to talk about topics important to citizens. The Council will continue to iron out more details at future meetings.

#### C. Environmental Commission Update

The Environmental Commission has been gathering community feedback to create a Climate Action Plan. Thankfully, the County has a health education staffer that received a grant on our behalf to make this much less of an effort and at little cost to the City.

The Commission has completed two outreach efforts. Most recently, they held an open house at City Hall. They also released a survey on climate topics. The City has received 61 responses to the survey thus far and plans to publish the results when the survey concludes in March.

Butkowski said that between now and the Commission's March meeting, City and county staff will sort the data into a matrix created by Ramsey County. The matrix will identify areas of importance to the City based on the feedback and what role the City will take in acting on the feedback. In some cases, like transportation, the City may dedicate staff and Council time to further a given cause (i.e. better transit access) but not necessarily spend physical or monetary resources. However, the City may plan to put financial resources to a tree replanting program, for example. The matrix will identify the goals, roles, and responsibilities. The goal is to have the Commission review the matrix at their March meeting. The Council would review after that. The matrix will then be sent to the consultant for the information to be included in the draft Climate Action Plan. There will be a final opportunity for community feedback at the Sustainability Fair in late April.

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Page 3 of 3

February 24, 2026

**Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

Butkowski stated that the next meeting would include the February financial report and the planned unit development application for 2421 Larpenteur Avenue West.

**Work Session**

A. Staff Project Updates

Butkowski shared that staff is wrapping up the 2025 audit; sent invitations to architects in the running for the municipal cannabis store for a follow up interview; gathering quotes to purchase a new public works pickup truck; signing documents related to the installation of the solar panel project; and looking for contractors for the warming house repairs.

B. Opportunity for the Public to Address the City Council

Mayor Gaasch opened the floor to those interested in addressing the Council. There being nobody interested in speaking, Mayor Gaasch closed the floor.

**Adjournment**

Councilor Dains moved and seconded by Councilor Kelly to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Miles Cline  
Deputy City Clerk