



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES January 20, 2026, ~ 7:00 PM

Council Present: Stephen A. Condon, Andrea Monson, Heather Hussong Reasoner, Jeff Paplow, and Brent Pavelko.

Council Absent: None

Others Present: Holly Rademacher – City Clerk, Roger Pohlman – Police Chief, Edith Behr- Police Officer, Chad Janssen, Matt Aden- Public Works Foreman, James Faggort, Justin Lessman- media online, Derek Schultz-online, Shelley Pohlman- online and Carol Schultz- online.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Stephen A. Condon.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA CHANGES/APPROVE AGENDA- A motion to approve the agenda as presented made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Monson**. All in favor. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- A motion to approve minutes from January 5, 2026, as presented, made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Paplow**. All in favor. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT – A motion to approve the financial report as presented for YTD through December 31,2025 made by **Monson/Pavelko**. All in favor. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS – Department Reports were presented, no questions and/or concerns were noted.

SCHEDULED/UNSCHEDULED GUESTS (limit 5 minutes each) –

Unscheduled- *James Faggort addressed the council at the adjournment of the meeting. Mayor Condon stated that the unscheduled guest was past but would allow him couple minutes to talk. He started off by thanking the council for supporting the MN mayor letter. He is disappointed that some of the council members let their personal feelings get in the way of factual decision. Faggort stated what happens at the federal level is not Lakefield's job to handle. He supports the letter and believes if Lakefield does not support then many businesses will be leaving. Faggort addressed the council on the snow emergency ticket he received after the recent declaration of snow emergency. He stated that the plow did not complete curb to curb in front of his residents or across the street. He asked the council to dismiss his administrative ticket, or he will be going to court and challenging Lakefield ordinances. He feels the snow emergency is a ticket trap and that 1" of snow is ridiculous and goes against state statue. Pavelko tried to explain that state statues are guides for cities and that the declaration of snow emergency is due to the predicted amount of snow fall for the public works foreman does not have a crystal ball to tell him actual amount of snow fall. When declaring snow emergency, it helps the public works department work effectively and in a timely manner to have all vehicles and such of the road for snow removal.*

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Fire Department 2026 Officers Recommendation-** Fire Chief Baumann stated the officers were voted on at the first meeting of the year with no changes. A motion to approve 2026 service ambulance officers as listed made by **Pavelko/Monson** all in favor, motion carried.
 - a. Chief – Tim Baumann
 - b. Assistant Chief – Tanner McClain
 - c. Second Assistant Chief/Training Officer – Cody Poelaert
 - d. Secretary/Treasurer – Kyle Reasoner
 - e. SCBA/Equipment Officer – Ryan Timko
 - f. Safety Officer – Eric Kruger
2. **Ambulance Service 2026 Officers Recommendation-** Kruger stated the officers were voted on at the first meeting of the year with no changes. A motion to approve 2026 fire department officers as listed made by **Pavelko/Monson** all in favor, motion carried.
 - a. Director – Elsie Kruger
 - b. Assistant/Training Officer – Katie Johnson

- c. Scheduling/Secretary – Desiree Zelinko
- d. Vehicle Maintenance – Alvin Schultz

3. **Heiman Invoice-** Bauman submitted an invoice from Heiman in the amount of \$5,097.39 for repairs completed on fire engine. Repairs completed included Removed and replaced gasket on high pressure manifold. Removed high pressure transfer valve. Inspected for damage saw broken O-ring, replaced O-ring cleaned and reinstalled. For foam pro confirmed that paddle wheel was the failed part of the system, then replaced with new paddle wheel. For Fix Mix, remove high pressure cone and inspect for damage. All looked good measure and found that the plunger was not in spec. Adjusted to set plunger to 16mm. Ran both systems to confirm operation. Rebuilt valve #2 and replace gauge. Removed and replaced auto drain, Replace O-ring on handle of valve. Removed and replaced drain. Removed and replaced swivel on hose reel. Flushed Tank with clean water. Removed and Replace foam tank float sensor. A motion to approve Heiman invoice in the amount of \$5,097.39 made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Monson** all in favor, motion carried.
4. **LFD Gambling License-** The Lakefield Fire Relief Association submitted off-site gambling application for the annual street dance fundraiser on the 18th of April at Lakefield VFW. A motion made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Pavelko** to approve the LG230 Minnesota Lawful Gambling application to conduct off-site gambling for the Lakefield Fire Department Relief Association on April 18, 2026, at Lakefield VFW Post 4743 located at 405 N Hwy 86 in Lakefield, MN. All in favor. Motion Carried.
5. **Resolution 26-09 Acceptance of Donations-** Lakefield Police Department is requesting Council acceptance of the \$500.00 grant from SWIF-MNRAAA. In October 2025, the Lakefield Police Department received a short-notice Grant Opportunity with Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (five days heads-up). Lakefield Police Department applied for the Grant, to fund a program called “What is Your Immigration Story”. On November 17, 2025 Lakefield Police Department received notice that our Grant proposal was accepted and a check for \$500 was issued. November 17, 2025, Lakefield Police Department also received approval from the Lakefield City Council on a special event permit to hold this event at the Multi-Purpose Center on May 6, 2026 from 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM. In 2024 AAA Minnesota stopped funding the “I Got Caught” Dairy Queen ice cream cone incentive program for children that were “caught” wearing their helmet when biking, skating or boarding. Lakefield Police Department sent the Jackson County Conservation League and letter asking them (JCCL) to consider donating to a youth recreational safety incentive. Working with Kiehl’s Bakery, LPD will create a coupon good for a donut or cookie. Officers will have the coupons available, and when a child is observed wearing their helmet while riding a bicycle, roller blades, foot scooter or other recreational activity that requires a helmet, the officer my “issue a coupon” to the child. Jackson County Conservation League met on January 13, 2026 and voted to donate \$300.00 to the Lakefield Police Department for this Youth helmet safety/incentive program. Request acceptance of the \$300.00 donation from JCCL for the helmet incentive program. A motion to accept donations in the amount of \$500 from MNRAAA and \$300 from JCCL to the LPD made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Paplow**, voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.
6. **Consideration of LPD Draft Policies-**Lakefield Police Department does not recommend renewal of Lexipol Policy Management program. Therefore, LPD is in the process of implementing POST Board Model Policies and other relevant policies. The following policies are provided for approval/review: #316 Missing and Endangered Persons Policy, #433 Public Assembly-First Amendment Policy, #603 Confidential Informants Policy and #703 Lighting Exemptions for Law Enforcement Policy. All four policies are POST board model policies that were updated in October 2025. A motion to approve four police department policies as presented made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Monson** all in favor, motion carried.
7. **Silversmith Data Invoice-** Rademacher explained invoice from Silversmith in the amount of \$2,990 for annual subscription. Silversmith is the GIS program the departments use for locating service lines, curb stops, electrical transformers, storm sewers and much more. The invoice would be split between the three departments. The utility commission approved contingent of council approval. A motion to approve Silversmith invoice in the amount of \$2,990 with street department responsible for one-third of the cost made by **Hussong-Reasoner/Pavelko** all in favor, motion carried.
8. **Flaherty Hood Invoice-** Invoice from Flaherty & Hood was submitted for labor, employment, and human resources consultation services in the amount of \$1,980.00. A detailed invoice of current charges is in the packet for review which includes review and recommendations for personnel policy and recommendation for termination of employee. A motion to approve payment of invoice from Flaherty & Hood in the amount of \$1,980 made by **Paplow/Hussong-Reasoner** all in favor, motion carried.

9. **Consider Quote for new City Hall Computers-** Rademacher presented to the council that office computers are due for an upgrade, currently the deputy clerk computer is no longer supported by Microsoft and is 12 years old. The finance computer is at the life span of 10 years and running out of space/memory and would like the capability to work remotely. The clerk's computer is 6 years old with memory space limited. With the new programming to be launched in April it would be beneficial to have upgraded computers to support and have the memory available. One quote from Computer Lodge for three Dell Pro 16 Laptops in the amount of \$3,567 and the second quote from Dell for three Dell 16 Pro laptops in the amount of \$4,193.87. Rademacher recommends approval of Computer Lodge quote for set up is included and the City currently has an IT contract with Computer Lodge. She also stated this quote will be split with the utilities contingent on council approval. A motion to approve the purchase of three Dell Pro 16 laptops in the amount of \$3,567 from Computer Lodge with splitting the cost with utilities (\$1,783.50) made by **Paplow/Hussong-Reasoner** all in favor, motion carried.
10. **Liquor Store open MLK Day 2026 Approval-** Frerichs the liquor store manager requested to be open on the 19th of January which was Martin Luther King Day. Frerichs stated every other liquor store is open and she would like to try these little Holidays in the new store and go by numbers next year and if numbers show it is not beneficial to be open, in 2027 the liquor store will be closed. As the personnel policy states that all city facilities will be closed with the exclusion of the liquor store being open on the following days: day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, New Years Eve. This policy was approved on December 22nd, 2025. Rademacher sent the request via email due to the short timeline and council meeting being the Tuesday after. Kruger provided numbers of previous years for council. She stated MLK Days in 2022 and 2023 the liquor store was closed. Somewhere along the lines Kristie decided to have it open. In 2024 it didn't lose as much money (264.36 loss) because a part-timer worked, and their wage at double time was even less than Frerichs's straight pay. In 2025 it was a \$455.97 loss. It makes Kruger look at Mondays as a whole. Even removing the additional holiday pay, Mondays the liquor store only breaks even or make a couple hundred bucks. From a profit and loss business standpoint, the liquor store should only be open on Mondays from about 4-9. That would keep our revenues close to the same but lower the expenses. In conclusion the email vote was 3- yes and 2- no, with one council member replying to all. Mayor Condon reminded council members with voting via email that the reply needs to only be to the clerk. Pavelko would like to find out if the numbers increase and a profit is made during the listed Holidays, if they continue to show a negative then consider that for the next year. Monson stated that 2025 was atypical year due to the store's relocation to the side door on Main Street of the new laundromat then after our new liquor store was completed, we returned our service back to Highway 86 and believe it would be beneficial to assess our performance over a full, uninterrupted year to accurately evaluate net profit. Pavelko would like the council to think about the Friday holidays (Juneteenth and July 4th). Rademacher stated Juneteenth is on the Thursday of Summerfest week which makes sense to be open due to the visitors and traffic in town, also the liquor store has not been open for July 4th in over 10 years, it has been a holiday to spend with family. A motion was made to allow the liquor store to be open on MLK 2026 by **Monson/Paplow** with one no and three yes, motion carried.
11. **MN Mayor Letter-** Mayor Condon stated his concern of signing the MN Mayor letter, saying he felt it was political and his duty as mayor is to represent ALL residents of Lakefield. He feels personally attacked and bullied into signing. He has reached out to three different lawyers for recommendations with all three of them stating that no one can force signature and if the mayor believes it goes against his beliefs he does not have to sign. Mayor also would like to see the letter being prepared for a federal level and not just state, he feels that it is a chain effect. He stated that individual letters would be beneficial if the council wished to support the letter to write their concerns to the representatives/senators/governor. Pavelko feels differently that a letter with multiple Mayors has more impact than individual. Pavelko read the letter for those that had not yet reviewed or seen the letter. In short, the letter states Minnesota mayors are warning that state-level fiscal mismanagement, including a projected \$2.9-\$3 billion 2028-29 deficit, is causing economic decline, driving a net loss of 48,000 residents, and forcing high property tax hikes (up to 8.7% in 2026) due to unfunded mandates. They demand fiscal restraint and pro-growth policies to prevent further damage to local public safety and services. Key Concerns and Impacts: Economic Decline: Between 2019 and 2024, Minnesota ranked 39th in job growth, 40th in labor force growth, and 46th in median household income growth. Fiscal Strain: The disappearance of a \$18 billion surplus, replaced by a projected deficit, has led to increased property tax pressures on residents and businesses. Local Impact: State policies and mandates are forcing cities to consider cutting services, delaying infrastructure projects, or reducing public safety staff, such as

police and firefighters. Calls for Action: Mayors are urging the state Legislature to adopt responsible budgeting, reduce unfunded mandates, and prioritize long-term fiscal sustainability. The mayors emphasized that the state's economic decisions are directly impacting the ability of local governments to maintain high-quality services and economic competitiveness. Pavelko did not want the agenda item to feel like an attack but for awareness. Pavelko feels the letter is a statement of fact and is nonpartisan. He asked for the council to come together and support the letter as a council. Mayor Condon recommended the council really consider that once they sign the disclaimer on the letter states that “this is the opinion of said signed mayors only and not an official position of any city government” he would like to see council support the issues individually. With the deadline approaching before the next scheduled council meeting Pavelko recommends council to come together and sign. Hussong-Reasoner asked if the mayors had formed a board or organization due to the submittal signature stating the undersigned Mayors of Minnesota. She understands the reasons for the letter due to the many factual items in the letter, and feels it needs to start somewhere but is unsure if this is correct course of action. She stated that she supports Mayor Condon’s decision and asked if the City of Lakefield could submit their own version of the letter. Monson stated as a council it does not seem appropriate to sign and that individual letters would be more effective. Paplow sees the letter as a plea for help and not a political aspect of it. With 1.3 million Minnesotans being represented by their mayor is a start. Janssen, a resident of Lakefield, stated he understands both sides of the decisions and believes there is no right answer. A motion to support and sign the MN Mayor letter as the council of Lakefield made by **Pavelko/Paplow**, 3-yes and 2-no, motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Other Board and Committee Reports

- a. EDA Update –**
 - i.** Next meeting on February 6th at 12:00 pm
- b. LPU Update**
 - i.** Next meeting on February 17th at 4:00 pm
- c. Park Update –**
 - i.** Next meeting on February 2nd at 4:30 pm
- d. Planning & Zoning Update -**
 - i.** Next Meeting on January 26th at 4:30 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. Next Council Meeting, Monday, February 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall**
- 2. City Hall will be CLOSED February 16th to observe Presidents Day!**

ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn made by **Paplow/Hussong Reasoner** to adjourn at 8:08 pm. All in favor. Motion carried.

Attest:

Holly Rademacher, City Clerk