WALKER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
LOWER-LEVEL COMMUNITY ROOM
DALE AND HARRIET JONES WALKER PUBLIC LIBRARY
203 TOWER AVENUE, WALKER, MINNESOTA
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026

Call to Order – Mayor Worth

- Pledge of Allegiance.
- Councilmembers present: Gene Granberg, Erin Haefele, Mary Beth Hansen, Gary Wilkening, Jerecho Worth
- Councilmembers absent: none
- Staff members present: Hope Fairchild, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Peter Anderley, Police Chief; Dan Martin, Public Works Director; Jennie Meyer, Zoning Administrator

- Others present during portions of the meeting include:

  Dean Morrill, Pilot Independent Newspaper

Consent Agenda – Mayor Worth

M/S Hansen/Haefele to approve of consent agenda items 1 through 33 as follows, waiving the reading.

1. Approve of Walker City Council regular meeting minutes of February 2, 2026.
2. Review and file draft of Planning Commission/Board of Adjustments regular meeting minutes of February 23, 2026.
3. Review and file January 2025 Zoning Administrator Report.
4. Approve of Public Works Committee regular meeting minutes of February 17, 2026.
5. Review and file draft of Library Advisory Board regular meeting minutes of February 10, 2026.
6. The February 24, 2026 Park Advisory Board meeting was not held due to lack of a quorum.
7. Review and file draft of Walker Area Joint Fire Department Board regular meeting minutes of February 12, 2026.
8. Approve of Planning Commission/Board of Adjustments meeting minutes of January 26, 2026.
9. Approve of Library Advisory Board regular meeting minutes of January 13, 2026.
10. Review and file Walker Police Department Monthly Report.

11. Approve of the Cash Balance Report and related spreadsheets dated January 31, 2026.
12. Approve of claim no. 66379 to claim no. 66439 and bank drafts 1405-1412, including voided check numbers 66355-66419 and 66419, in the amount of $306,952.09.
13. Review and file Sales Tax Receipts.
14. Review and file 2026 Mobile Food Units Schedule.
15. Review and file 2026 Temporary Liquor License Schedule.
16. Review and file 2026 Gambling Permits Schedule.
17. Review and file thank-you letter from the Initiative Foundation.
18. Review and file the Walker Area Food Shelf 2025 Impact Report.
19. Approve of the Application and Permit for a 1 Day to 4 Day Temporary On-Sale Liquor License from Walker Rotary Club to take place on July 3-6, 2026 in the Walker City Park.
20. Approve of the Application and Permit for a 1 Day to 4 Day Temporary On-Sale Liquor License from the Walker Rotary Club to take place on April 25, 2026 at the Walker Area Community Center, located at 105 Tower Avenue.
21. Approve of paying invoice number 518668 in the amount of $11,875.00 to Abdo, LLP., for progress payment on the audit of financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2025.
22. Approve of paying invoice number INUS424549 in the amount of $36,397.20 to Axon Enterprise, Inc., for police tasers.
23. Approve of the recommendation of the Public Works Committee to pay invoice number 14878141 in the amount of $2,716.10 to Hach Company for DR900 Multiparameter tester for use at the water plant.
24. Approve of paying Payment Application #5 in the mount of $28,253.13 to Hy-Tec Construction for City Park restrooms construction.
25. Approve of paying invoice number 26492 in the amount of $2,086.17 to Microtech Computer Center for monthly managed IT and update to technology system.
26. Approve of paying invoice number 502847 in the amount of $5,130.00 to SEH, Inc. for Walker Municipal Airport 2026 Airfield Pavement Maintenance Final Design engineering work through January 31, 2026.
27. Approve of paying invoice number 067776 in the amount of $72,391.00 to Stepp Manufacturing Company, Inc. to purchase a pavement crack sealer for the streets department.
28. Approve of paying invoice number ARIV1082475 in the amount of $6,979.50 to Ulteig Operations, LLC for Walker Tower Avenue Extension engineering work completed through February 1, 2026.
29. Approve of Resolution 07-2026, a Resolution Approving of Summary Publication of Ordinance Number 2026-01, an Amendment of the Zoning Map.
30. Approve of Portage Brewing Company LLC's renewal of the following liquor licenses:
    - Brewer Off-Sale
    - Small Brewer Off-Sale
    - Tap Room On-Sale Sunday
31. Approve of the Park Use Application from the Walker Rotary for its 4th of July Celebration to take place from July 3, 2026 to July 6, 2026 in the Lower City Park.
32. Approve of the Park Use Application from the Leech Lake Area Chamber of Commerce for the Leech Lake Walleye Tournament to take place in the Lower City Park and at the Lighthouse on Friday, May 29, 2026 to Sunday, May 31, 2026.

33. Approve of the Park Use Application from the Leech Lake Area Chamber of Commerce for the Spring Bike Fling taking place in the Lower City Park and at the Lighthouse on Saturday, June 16, 2026.
    Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
    Motion passed (5-0)

Scheduled Presentations – Mayor Worth

1. Present DQ gift cards to WHA 4th Grade Students for the 2026 Minnesota Rural Water Week Poster Contest.
    - 1st place: Gema Rash from Mr. Riley's class
    - 2nd place: Hannah LaFontaine from Ms. Richter's class
    - 3rd place: Lily Freeman from Ms. Richter's class
2. Presentation from George with the Lake May Senior Center Requesting a Donation for the Meals on Wheels program.
    Presentation: George presented the reason for the organization's request for a donation from the City. Councilmember Wilkening inquired about the organization's annual budget, which is approximately $12,000. It was noted that rising utility costs have created financial challenges for the Senior Center. George explained that the organization also seeks contributions from surrounding townships, even though some do not directly receive the Meals on Wheels service, as seniors from nearby communities frequently visit the center for coffee and socializing. City Administrator Hope Fairchild noted that the organization requested $1,000 from the City in the previous year.

City Staff Comments – Administrator Fairchild

None.

Budget, Administration & Public Works – Councilmember Wilkening

1. **M/S Wilkening/Worth** to approve of Resolution 08-2026, a Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Ambulance Fund to the General Fund, and Closure of the Ambulance Fund.
    Discussion: City Administrator Hope Fairchild explained that the action is based on guidance from the City's auditors. She noted that the City no longer owns the ambulance garage, as Hubbard and Cass Counties have purchased the ambulance garage for use within the subordinate taxing service district.
    Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
    Motion passed (5-0)
2. **M/S Wilkening/Worth** to approve of Resolution 09-2026, a Resolution Authorizing the Closure of Specified Water and Sewer Debt Service Funds.
    Discussion: Councilmember Wilkening explained that the process was originally established to track and audit individual projects separately. He suggested continuing to monitor projects in this way so the City can clearly understand where each project stands at the end of the year, particularly in relation to associated debt obligations. Maintaining this approach will also assist with planning and prioritizing future public works projects.
    Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
    Motion passed (5-0)

3. **M/S Wilkening/Worth** to approve of Resolution 10-2026, a Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds from the Community Digital Sign Fund to the General Fund and Closing the Community Digital Sign Fund.
   Discussion: Councilmember Wilkening explained that the fund was originally established to collect a small percentage of revenue from advertising to support the maintenance and upkeep of the sign. He noted that only minimal funds have been deposited into the account over the years.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
4. **M/S Wilkening/Worth** to approve of Resolution 11-2026, a Resolution Approving of West Side Project Plans and Specifications, and Ordering Advertisement for Bids.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
5. **M/S Wilkening/Hansen** to approve of Resolution 12-2026, a Resolution Authorizing Application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
6. **M/S Wilkening/Worth** to approve of not moving forward with quote of $30,000 - $35,000 to pave and line parking lot located on 7th Street across from the Walker Fire Hall and placing gravel or material similar to for the parking area.
   Discussion: This item had been previously tabled. The Council acknowledged the importance of maintaining parking in the area and noted that it will likely continue to be used for parking whether the surface is paved or not. As an alternative to paving, the Council discussed the possibility of using gravel or a similar material.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
   M/S Wilkening/Hansen to approve of advertising a public hearing to establish a fee schedule for an application fee to allow for an On-Sale Convention Center liquor license.
   Discussion: City Administrator Hope Fairchild explained that the City has not previously issued this type of license, though it is common and permitted under state statute. Councilmember Wilkening noted that a fee would need to be established and added to the City's fee schedule. Administrator Fairchild stated the Council could choose to create a separate fee for this license or align it with an existing annual fee, noting the license would likely not be used on a daily basis. Aimee, representing the WACC, indicated that any revenue generated through use of the license would be directed toward the center's operations. The Council acknowledged that catering involves significant work and expense and agreed it makes sense for the center to hold the license. Administrator Fairchild also discussed scheduling a public hearing at the April meeting to consider an update to the City's fee schedule prior to the WACC submitting an application.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
7. **M/S Granberg/Worth** To approve of increasing the donation from the requested $1,000.00 to $2,000.00 to the Lake May Senior Center for the Meals on Wheels program.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)

8. **M/S Hansen/Worth** to approve of donation request and agreement in the amount of $3,500.00 from the Walker Area Community Center to fund the Dewey Community Outdoor Skating Rink.
   Discussion: City Administrator Hope Fairchild explained that, in the past, cities and townships shared responsibility for funding the outdoor rink. She noted that Shingobee Township submitted a donation for the 2025 season. Administrator Fairchild also stated that the City has contributed the water used for the rink, with the current estimated cost at approximately $5,000, compared to a previous estimate of $3,500. Councilmember Granberg noted that approximately $1,200 of the $5,000 total represents electricity costs covered by the WACC. The Council indicated that future requests would benefit from being submitted earlier and including a detailed cost breakdown, as well as coordination with surrounding townships to establish fair contribution percentages.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
9. **M/S Wilkening/Worth** to approve of proceeding with the 2027 Tower Avenue Extension Project and focus on completion of 2nd street to highway 371 or the east side portion of the plan.
   Discussion: City Administrator Hope Fairchild asked the Council for feedback on whether there was any additional information they needed from staff to assist in making decisions regarding the project. Councilmember Wilkening stated that he believed the public clearly expressed their concerns during the public hearing, but also noted it would be unwise for the City to walk away from funding that has been secured for the project. He suggested the City consider abandoning the west side portion of the project and continuing with the east side improvements. Wilkening noted that the east side portion had been planned for many years prior to the larger project proposal and includes looping the City's water system, which would improve water quality, enhance fire protection, and reduce maintenance compared to a dead-end water line.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)

Personnel & Planning and Zoning– Councilmember Hansen
None.

Cemetery & Parks – Councilmember Haefele
None.

Airport & Library – Councilmember Granberg
1. **M/S Granberg/Worth** to approve of the Facility Use Agreement and License for the green space between the WHA School ballfield and the Walker Public Library parking lot.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)
2. **M/S Granberg/Worth** to approve of the bid in the amount of $113,154.25 from Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC for the Walker Municipal Airport 2026 Airfield Pavement and Maintenance Project.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)

3. **M/S Granberg/Worth** to approve of the Supplemental Letter Agreement between the City of Walker and SEH, Inc. for the Walker Municipal Airport 2026 Airfield Pavement Maintenance project at the cost of $23,800.00, which is reimbursable by grants.
   Roll call: Ayes: Granberg, Haefele, Hansen, Wilkening, Worth Nays:
   Motion passed (5-0)

Announcements – Mayor Worth

- Upcoming meeting dates:
  - Library Advisory Board meeting: 3/10/2026 at 5:00 p.m. (Lower-Level Community Room within the Dale and Harriet Jones Walker Public Library)
  - Walker Area Joint Fire Department Board meeting: 3/12/2026 at 6:00 p.m. (Walker Fire Hall Meeting Room)
  - Public Works Committee meeting: 3/17/2026 at 7:00 a.m. (Lower-Level Community Room within the Dale and Harriet Jones Walker Public Library)
  - Park Advisory Board meeting: 3/24/2026 at 5:00 p.m. (Lower-Level Community Room within the Dale and Harriet Jones Walker Public Library)
  - Planning Commission/Board of Adjustments meeting: 3/30/2026 at 6:00 p.m. (Lower-Level Community Room within the Dale and Harriet Jones Walker Public Library)
  - City Council meeting: 4/06/2026 at 6:00 p.m. (Lower-Level Community Room within the Dale and Harriet Jones Walker Public Library)
- In accordance with Minnesota Statutes section 13D.01 and 13D.05, the City Council will now go into a closed meeting to perform the City Administrator's regular annual performance evaluation. The City Council will summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, which will take place on April 6, 2026.

Adjournment – Mayor Worth

Mayor Worth adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

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Jerecho Worth, Mayor Hope Fairchild, City Administrator/Clerk-Trs.