

MEETING MINUTES OF THE WEST LIBERTY CITY COUNCIL

WEST LIBERTY, IOWA

January 20, 2026

Mayor Mark Smith called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. by roll call. City Council Members in attendance: Councilmember Omar Martinez, Councilmember Josh Shiltz, Mayor Pro-Tem Cara McFerren, Councilmember Dana Dominguez and Councilmember Tim Parizek. City Staff in attendance: City Manager Lee Geertz, City Clerk Shari Hoffert, Public Relations Specialist Brittany Woodson, Library Director Allie Paarsmith, and Police Chief Josh Houser. Electric Superintendent Cody Franklin arrived at the meeting at 6:46 p.m. *The full video can be viewed on the City website at www.cityofwestlibertyia.org.*

The City Council approved the agenda. Martinez/Shiltz (5-0)

The City Council approved the consent agenda. Dominguez/Martinez (5-0)

Reports: City Engineer Lenny Larson communicated that the E 6th Street Project Plans are 90% complete and they were sent out last week to the necessary parties for review. Larson communicated that the DOT has reached out with some tabulations they would like to see within this project. Larson communicated that Council would be setting the date for the Public Hearing later during the Council Meeting. Larson communicated that for this project there would be a neighborhood meeting where the community will be able to come in and ask questions about the project. There will be work completed to attain easements for the project both temporary and a 10 ft utility easement as well. This project will go from Spencer St. to Corn St. and will also include Farmers Lane. Larson communicated that there would be meetings with the Electric Department as well to go over the electric portion of the project. Larson communicated that there is work being done on submitting the DNR Water and Sewer permits and work to amend the current permits to increase from 142 million gallons of water to 200 million gallons of water to allow a cushion if the City expands. Larson communicated that there will be work with the Wastewater Treatment Plant for Phase II and a grade 4 operator will be down to work with Staff. Larson communicated that there are also discussions about the West Side Loop to ensure redundancy if any of the other water mains would go down to keep the community equipped with water. Councilmember Dana Dominguez thanked Larson for his work with Staff and communicated that during the goal setting work session, Staff was raving about ISG and the changes since the City made the switch to the new Engineering Firm. Mayor Mark Smith updated Council on the Fire Agency meeting. Smith communicated that there was discussion on the proposed budget and explained this will be dependent upon what the City is able to put forward in their budget. Smith communicated that the transfer of Ambulance services appears to be going well. Councilmember Tim Parizek added that the Agency is working on the abstract, has the new camera system installed, and is still currently working on the lease agreement with the railroad.

Vender Voucher Claims List #1 (Reg, Prepaid) in the amount of \$555,892.83 was approved. McFerren/Parizek (5-0)

During the public comments and/or correspondence section of the meeting there were no comments made by community members. Councilmember Dana Dominguez communicated that she knows of a practicing mental health professional who is interested in having a location at the City Administration Building and communicated that there would be the possibility of pro-bono work for those who did not have Medicaid insurance. Councilmember Josh Shiltz communicated that community members had reached out and were unsure if the City was open on Monday for Martin Luther King Day. Shiltz communicated that he spoke with Public Relations Specialist Brittany Woodson about possibly posting information next year about this, so the community is informed. Shiltz communicated that several community members reached out expressing their gratitude for the Police Department after the recent events and communicated that it reminded people to think of the good things the Police Department does. Mayor Pro Tem Cara McFerren questioned if the City Calendar was on the website. Public Relations Specialist Brittany Woodson communicated that it is posted in several different including the google calendar and the Public Works page. Woodson communicated this is updated through December 31st, 2026.

There was Discussion and Appropriate Action by the City Council of West Liberty, IA, on the Request to Secure Classroom Space for the Youth Services Program with the Ministerial Association. City Manager Geertz communicated this would be the 2nd room on the back side of the restrooms. Geertz communicated that this would currently be dedicated space and not a shared space as other organizations have. Geertz communicated that this is not to be in competition with the school, but to work with the Library, Parks and Recreation Departments to help minimize overcrowding for this age group at the Library. Geertz communicated that the Ministerial Association is also looking at grant opportunities. There was a motion to allocate Classroom 125 for Public use by the West Liberty Ministerial Association to serve as a designated Youth Services space. Dominguez/Shiltz (5-0)

There was Discussion and Appropriate Action by the City Council of West Liberty, IA, on the Reverse Osmosis (R/O) Train 1 Membrane and Anti-Scalent Pump for the Water Treatment Plant in the City of West Liberty, IA, 52776. Councilmember Josh Shiltz communicated that there was a detailed memo and motioned to approve the membrane replacement plus two anti-scalent pumps. This was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cara McFerren. The motion passed by roll call vote. Shiltz/McFerren Martinez-Y, Parizek-Y, McFerren-Y, Dominguez-Y, Shiltz-Y (5-0)

There was Discussion and Appropriate Action by the City Council of West Liberty, IA, on the Memorandum Action Item for Sunshine Bakery LLC for the Development of an Economic Development Incentive. WELEAD Director Phil Wiese communicated that this is an amazing opportunity for a small business to get started. Business Owner Debora Lopez and her partner Rebecca introduced themselves. Husband to Debora Lopez, Andy Lopez, also introduced himself and his support for the business. Wiese communicated that this would be opening at the old tortilla factory across from BP. Wiese communicated that he has done a lot of research on other communities and worked with City Manager Lee Geertz and Sunshine Bakery to come up with the memo placed before Council. City Manager Geertz thanked Sunshine Bakery and communicated that she is very excited for a young couple and sister to be able to start a business. Geertz communicated that it is difficult to start a business and applauded Sunshine Bakery for the work they do in the community helping families in need and assisting with the food pantry. Geertz communicated this gave the opportunity to get creative and work together to come up with ideas on other ways to assist new businesses. Councilmember Dana Dominguez communicated that she would like to see more of this in the future. Councilmember Josh Shiltz questioned if this was going to become the new norm for new businesses. WELEAD Director Phill Wiese communicated that this is a pilot, and the goal is to

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be able to continue to grow with this. Shiltz questioned, pending approval of the memo, if Council is ratifying each item in the memo or if there are further steps. City Manager Geertz communicated that this is an initial directive followed by review from legal, to make sure these items are an appropriate offering. Geertz communicated this was tailored to Sunshine Bakery needs to how the City could offer incentives. For other new businesses, there may be other needs so at this time there is not a confirmed list of what will be offered, but more of a discussion with businesses to see how the City can incentivize the development of business. Mayor Pro Tem Cara McFerren communicated that she would like to see this grow and potentially help existing businesses in the future as well. McFerren communicated that she would like to see a list of potential items for these types of situations brought to Council for review. WELEAD Director Phil Wiese communicated that a list could be put together during work sessions to provide that information between WELEAD and the City. Councilmember Shiltz communicated if Council moves forward this action, it will be setting the tone for items in the future. City Manager Geertz communicated that this is a common practice in rural Iowa to help fill store fronts within the community. Shiltz communicated that he is looking forward to Sunshine Bakery and thanked them for attending the meeting. There was a motion to approve the direct request to allow the City Manager to work with WELEAD in developing a final, formalized economic development incentive package incorporating the incentives outlined in the memo, having legal review, and bring back the agreement for Council approval. Dominguez/Parizek (5-0)

There was Discussion and Appropriate Action by the City Council of West Liberty, IA, on the Economic Development Matching Fund Grant for WLFE, LLC- Application 20250120-01. Mayor Pro Tem questioned if this was a new building for WLFE, LLC. WELEAD Director Phil Wiese communicated that this was a previous application, unfortunately City Manager Geertz had no support when this was applied for the last time. Wiese communicated that this would be the City's contribution to help qualify for the IEDA Catalyst Grant next on the agenda. There was a motion to approve the Economic Development Matching Fund Grant application for WLFE, LLC. McFerren/Dominguez (5-0)

Resolution 20260120-302: A Resolution Authorizing the City of West Liberty to Apply for the 2026 IEA Catalyst Grant on behalf of WLFE, LLC as part of the West Liberty Downtown Revitalization Grant was approved by roll call vote. McFerren/Martinez Shiltz-Y, Dominguez-Y, Parizek-Y, McFerren-Y, Martinez-Y (5-0)

Resolution 20260120-303: A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Submit Notice of Termination of the Facilities Interconnection Agreement with Interstate Power & Light Company was approved by roll call vote. McFerren/Dominguez McFerren-Y, Dominguez-Y, Parizek-Y, Shiltz-Y, Martinez-Y (5-0)

Resolution 20260120-304: A Resolution Setting the Time and Place of a Public Hearing on the Plans and Specs for the 6th Street Reconstruction Project in the City of West Liberty, IA, 52776, was approved by roll call vote. McFerren/Martinez Parizek-Y, Dominguez-Y, McFerren-Y, Shiltz-Y, Martinez-Y (5-0) The Public Hearing will be on February 3rd, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the City Administration Building.

Council set the date for a Public Hearing on the US 6 Bridge over Wapsinoc Creek for the Iowa DOT to acquire a Permanent Easement from the City of West Liberty for February 3rd, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the City Administration Building by consensus.

Mayor Mark Smith gave a preview of the February 3rd, 2026, Council Meeting to include possible discussions on ways to promote the nations 250 years on July 7th, 2026, setting a budget amendment, and setting budget work sessions.

Mayor Pro Tem Cara McFerren communicated her appreciation for City Manager Geertz delivering the Iowa League of Cities update due to the recent events with tax levy ceilings and the possibility of freezing property taxes for those over 60. McFerren communicated this is a big hit to small communities.

City Manager Geertz communicated that her and Library Director Allie Paarsmith met with the Muscatine County Board of Supervisors to discuss funding for the West Liberty Library. Geertz communicated that the percentage the City is asking for is a fair amount and they requested the entirety of it. Library Director Allison Paarsmith communicated that the allocation amount would not be provided until February or March. Mayor Pro Tem Cara McFerren communicated that there is a large gap between one city's allocation vs the other two and communicated that the City of West Liberty seems to be getting short changed. Councilmember Josh Shiltz communicated his appreciation for Library Director Paarsmith and City Manager Geertz's work on this and expressed his hope that this year would have a positive outcome.

There was a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting by consent vote at 7:29 p.m. McFerren/Martinez (5-0)

Mayor, Mark Smith

ATTEST:

City Clerk, Shari Hoffert