

City of Baldwin City
Minutes
Tuesday, July 15, 2025
Regular Council Meeting

A. Call to Order

The Baldwin City Council was called to Regular Session at 7:00 p.m. at the Baldwin City Community Center, 712 Chapel Street, with Mayor Casey Simoneau presiding.

Present were Council Members: Jay King, Susan Pitts, Scott Lauridsen, and Julie Constantinescu.

Also, attending: Russ Harding-Interim City Administrator; Amara Packard-City Clerk; Shiloh Afonja-Deputy City Clerk; and Lynn Meador-Communications Director.

B. Approval of Agenda

Susan Pitts moved and Scott Lauridsen seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

C. Consent Agenda

Jay King moved and Scott Lauridsen seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

1. Minutes - 7.01.25
2. Scheduled Claims List
3. Special Event-Baker University Move In

D. Public Comment

Jerry Smith-1308 High St.-asked if the 56 Highway alignment project was still moving forward. Mayor Simoneau stated that it is still being discussed and the city has submitted a request for them to increase the amount they are funding, but have not received a response yet.

Jerry Smith asked if Mayor Simoneau was building a house and if he was connecting to any utilities, and if he was using the tax abatement. The city does not own any utilities in that location. The mayor is able to use the tax incentives just like any other citizen building a house in the city limits.

E. Special Reports or Presentations

F. Old Business

1. Brick Street Project

There was a survey with three different options with maple leaves, 99 people responded. Forty two percent voted in favor of the leaf from the city flag.

Julie Constantinescu said that her Public Works Committee discussed this, and with the leaf potentially being in the middle of the intersection of 8th and High Street, the truck route needs to be established and enforced.

There is an ordinance with a truck route using Lawrence Street, High Street, and 11th Street. The route would need to have the intersection of 11th and High Street reviewed to ensure trucks can make that turn. That discussion needs to be a priority.

The council needs to make the decision on what color of brick to use. Council discussed using new brick for the maple leaf, and the old brick around the maple leaf so if they are able to use the old brick going forward, for the rest of the downtown streets, it would match.

Jerry Smith-1308 High St.- said he saw stamped brick in a driveway, and is that a possibility for the streets.

Jay King moved and Susan Pitts seconded to add the city flag leaf design into the intersection using the new brick as the leaf and old brick for the border. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

2. Council Hiring Committee-Discussion

Scott Lauridsen and Julie Constantinescu with the hiring committee, met with the League of Municipalities for the State of Kansas, regarding their history and what their process is in hiring a new city administrator. There was one other search firm proposal in the packet to see that they are comparable.

There needs to be an updated job description drawn up to begin this process. The council would like to have the League present at the next council meeting to determine if this is the route the council would like to go.

G. New Business

1. Electric Rate Ordinance 1513

There are three options for electric rate increase for the council to review. Council discussed which option would be easiest on the citizens. Option 1 would increase rates by 15% for July's use and 10% for September's use. Option 2 would increase rates 25% for July's use. Option 3 is a 10% increase with July's use for residential customers, and 15% increase for demand users, and making the customer meter charge \$25.00 instead of \$12.00. Jay King expressed his concern of how this is going to affect many citizens and small businesses right now, and would like to see how each option would look for citizens.

Susan Pitts moved and Julie Constantinescu second to approve Ordinance 1513 option 3 as presented. Motion carried with a vote 3 yes and 1 no.

Roll call vote: Julie Constantinescu-yes, Scott Lauridsen-yes, Susan Pitts-yes, and Jay King-no.

2. Pole Banner Discussion

Dana Mullis, the Organization Director for the Chamber of Commerce, and the Director of the Main Street Program, showed the council the final designs of the pole banners. The design team along with the mural committee from the Lumberyard Arts Center, got the community involved for themes that reflected the City of Baldwin. The two local artists for the banners are Emma Bailey and Christina Maliki. The banners celebrate Baldwin City's history, community service, veterans, schools, Baker, arts, and festivals.

Julie Constantinescu said that these artists have put a lot of time and effort into these designs. The council is very happy with how they turned out.

Julie Constantinescu moved and Jay King seconded to approve the pole banner designs that have been brought forward. Motion passes with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

3. Revenue Neutral-Discussion/Set Hearing Date If Exceeding Revenue Neutral

The revenue neutral rate that the council must adopt or exceed is 38.943. That is a reduction of 4.4 mills, or dollar value of \$243,000.00. The city would need to reduce the mill levy rate by 17% unless they exceeded the revenue neutral rate. The first step in this process is deciding if the council wants to exceed the revenue neutral rate. If they choose to do so, they would also need to set a date for the hearing. The council is not obligated to anything at this step. This step essentially is to notify Douglas County.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Susan Pitts seconded to approve the notice of revenue neutral intent as presented with the change of the county to Douglas, spelled correctly. Motion passes with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

H. Committee Reports

1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Cory Venable

- Electric Rate options 1-3
- General Fund
- Municipal Solar Energy

Next meeting 7/18/2025 at 7:30am, second floor of City Hall

2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Susan Pitts

Next meeting will be 7/28/2025 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

3. Public Safety - Susan Pitts/Jay King

Next meeting will be 8/12/2025 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

4. Public Works and Utilities - Julie Constantinescu/Jay King

- The new substation location is getting worked on, pad for transformer poured, poles for the substation line from Orange Street to the new sub site will be getting installed.
- Sediment in the water chemicals used for generators
- Work on golf course parking lot has started
- Citywide cleanup went well, fall cleanup is the weekend prior to the Maple Leaf Festival
- Public works has been working on the old trailer park brush and tall grass
- Met with Green Environmental about trash trucks damaging the chip and seal in the culdesacs
- Community solar projects
- Going forward all Public Works and Utilities Committee meetings will be at the Public Works Facility conference room

Next meeting will be 8/14/2025 at 9:00am, Public Works Conference Room

5. Strategic Planning-Scott Lauridsen/Julie Constantinescu

Next meeting TBD at 2:00pm, second floor of City Hall

I. City Administrator and Staff Comments

Russ Harding stated he has received letters from concerned citizens regarding the length of time to shoot fireworks off.

Mayor Simoneau has sent this to the CDC to be discussed.

Jay King suggested having a designated area to shoot off fireworks prior to the 1st of July.

J. Council & Mayor Comments

Mayor Simoneau wanted to let everyone know for full transparency, that the program he is involved in with the new construction of his house, was enacted prior to him being mayor. He also stated that the reason he is not on city utilities is because the city does not own those utilities and to purchase that area would be hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase. He would rather be on city utilities.

K. Executive Session

Scott Lauridsen moved and Jay King seconded to go into executive session with the council, the mayor, acting city administrator and our city attorney for attorney client privilege until 8:50. Motion passes with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

Mayor Simoneau called the meeting back to order at 8:50.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Susan Pitts seconded to go back into executive session with the same group, for the same reasons, back at 9:00.

Mayor Simoneau called the meeting back to order at 9:00.

L. Adjourn

Julie Constantinescu moved and Susan seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 4-0.
Time: 9:00 p.m.

Attest:

Amara M. Packard
City Clerk