

City of Baldwin City
Minutes
Tuesday, August 19, 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, Cory Venable, and Scott Lauridsen.

Also, attending: Russ Harding-Interim City Administrator; Amara Packard-City Clerk; Shiloh Afonja-Deputy City Clerk; Jeff Winkler-Power Plant Superintendent; Rob Culley-Public Works Director; Shaye Downing-City Attorney; Lynn Meador-Communications Director; Officer Brooks, Officer Murphy and Sgt. Stephenson-Police Department.

B. Approval of Agenda

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

C. Consent Agenda

Susan Pitts 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 - 8.05.25
2. Scheduled Claims List
3. Special Event-Baldwin City Fashion Show

D. Public Comment

E. Special Reports or Presentations

F. Old Business

1. Old Motel Property

At the last meeting, the council approved to sell the old motel lot, but there needs to be a motion for Mayor Simoneau to sign the deed for the title company.

Cory Venable moved and Jay King seconded to give authorization to Mayor Simoneau to sign the deed for the old motel property. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

2. Electric Rate Ordinance Revision

Matt with Baker Tilly explained to the council that when working on the new rate, the goal was to increase revenue by 10%. The rate did not take into account the increase in the debt service fee. The ordinance presented today shows the debt service fee and new rate combined totalling the 10% increase.

Scott Lauridsen explained that the Budget and Finance Committee decided the Friday before the last meeting to up the debt service fee to \$25.00 and Baker Tilly went to work on numbers. Typically, the Budget and Finance Committee looks over the numbers very close to they are completely comfortable with the numbers. The committee had not done that prior to the council meeting. After the ordinance was passed, the committee did its due diligence and scrutinized the numbers. After seeing the discrepancy, this ordinance was brought forward to correct it back to the corrected rate.

Cory Venable explained that the debt service fee was baked into the rate, and should not have been.

The committee presented two options for the council to choose from. The first option would credit each household for the amount they were overcharged in July, and also change the rate to the corrected rate. The second option corrects the rate, but the payback for the overcharge in July, is over the next 5 months. The July rate was \$0.154 per kilowatt hour. Option 1 rate is \$.145 per kilowatt hour with a credit back of \$13.20 to each non-demand customer. Option 2 is \$0.1411 per kilowatt hour, and will credit back the money they overpaid over the next 5 months.

Jeff Winkler provided the council with stats that show July 2025 kilowatt usage as the highest we have had since at least 2018, if not ever.

Scott Lauridsen reminded the council that included in the ordinance, is the MCI, municipal cost index, that is factored in every January.

Jay King thanked the Budget and Finance Committee for their time and commitment to this.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Susan Pitts seconded to approve the rates in option two for ordinance 1517. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

Scott Lauridsen-yes, Cory Venable-yes, Susan Pitts-yes, and Jay King-yes.

G. New Business

Susan Pitts recused herself for this discussion.

1. Solar Ordinance Discussion relative to state statute

Jeff Winkler explained that state statutes have changed regarding solar net metering policies and have to be followed by municipal utilities. Reverse power would be power that solar produces and is in excess of what the customer was using, and it goes back onto the city system. Forward power is the amount that the customer is using from the utility. State law now says that any reverse power has to be credited back to the customer. If the city calls the generation "Parallel Generation", the city gets to determine the rate that is given to the customer for their reverse power. If the city calls the generation "Net Metering", the customer has to receive full retail credit for reverse credit up until the amount that they take from the city. They also get our avoided energy costs only which is approximately \$0.02-\$0.03 per kilowatt hour. KMEA and KMU are helping a lot of cities and are coming up with a generation toolbox. It is Jeff's recommendation that the city follow the ordinances as they are, but call them all parallel generation. That would consist of two different rates, one for residential and one for commercial. The second change with the new laws deals with the size of the systems. If you call it parallel generation, there is a formula that states the size your unit needs to be, based on the last 12 months of use. If it is net metering, that formula is double, and they can have double the size of the unit than for parallel generation.

There is currently an application pending for solar, so the ordinance needs to be updated as soon as possible so they can move forward on their project. The state statute took effect July 1st of 2025.

H. Committee Reports

1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Cory Venable
 - Had several meetings working with Baker Tilly for couple of options for the electric rates presented this eveningNext meeting 8/29/2025 at 7:30am, second floor of City Hall
2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Susan Pitts
 - Food Truck Ordinance - group from Douglas County spoke, making themselves and resources available as the committee develops the ordinanceNext meeting will be 9/22/2025 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall
3. Public Safety - Susan Pitts/Jay King
 - Discussed establishing fees with marijuana offensesNext meeting will be 9/09/2025 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall
4. Public Works and Utilities - Julie Constantinescu/Jay King
Next meeting will be TBD 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

J. Council & Mayor Comments

Scott Lauridsen said that they took down some questions at the forum that they want to respond to in a transparent way. They will discuss how to do that in the best way. There will also be a committee put together to come up with ideas for that.

Susan Pitts said that she agrees, they thought they were being transparent and realized from the forums that they were not doing a good enough job.

K. Executive Session

Cory Venable moved and Susan Pitts seconded to go into executive session with the Council, the Mayor, Acting City Administrator Russ Harding, and City Attorney Shaye Downing, to discuss non-elected personnel for attorney client privilege for 22 minutes, from 8:08pm until 8:30. Motion passes with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

Mayor Simoneau called the meeting back to order at 8:30.

L. Adjourn

Cory Venable moved and Jay King seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 4-0. Time: 8:30 p.m.

Attest:

Amara M. Packard
City Clerk