

City of Baldwin City
Minutes
Tuesday, November 18, 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, Scott Lauridsen and Julie Constantinescu.

Also, attending: Russ Harding-Interim City Administrator; Amara Packard-City Clerk; Shiloh Afonja-Deputy City Clerk, and Sgt. Stephenson-Police Department.

B. Approval of Agenda

Julie Constantinescu moved and Susan Pitts seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with a vote of 5 yes and 0 no.

C. Consent Agenda

Jay King moved and Susan Pitts seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried with a vote of 5 yes and 0 no.

1. Minutes - 11.04.25
2. Scheduled Claims List
3. Special Event-Festival of Lights
4. Liquor License-The Bullpen

D. Public Comment

Tina Rakes-Wanted to ask the council and mayor if there were any updates with the water line project that could be shared. Tina also asked where the process was with the new City Administrator position.

Gerald Cullumber-Asked the city council where they stood on the City Administrator position and feels he should be involved in the hiring process as a new incoming mayor.

E. Special Reports or Presentations

F. Old Business

G. New Business

1. Planning Commission Appointment

A member of the planning commission resigned recently so Mayor Simoneau recommended to the council the appointment of Joe Torkelson to the Planning Commission, to finish the term of the person stepping down.

Joe Torkelson has been through the planning commission a couple of times for Airbnb and a rezone. He is captain of the Palmyra Fire Department, he is a general contractor, and has been in construction for 20 years.

Cory Venable moved and Susan Pitts seconded to approve Joe Torkelson as a Planning Commission appointee. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Ordinance 1524

Susan Pitts recused herself.

This ordinance is in regards to airbnb's within the city. There have been many requests, and none have been disapproved. This ordinance would repeal the ordinance for bed and breakfasts in town, which is what the city has been following.

Stu Young-Code Administrator-went over residential code, and how the bed and breakfast code allows for neighbors to weigh in on if they want a bed and breakfast in their neighborhood. There are many safety issues that are looked at during their yearly inspection. Stu requested no change in the current regulations.

Tina Rakes spoke about how transparency is so important and letting property owners within 200 feet of the proposed property know what is going on is important.

Mayor Simoneau asked Tina if Lawrence recently relaxed their airbnb code for the World Cup. Tina told the council there have been big discussions with Lawrence area to Kansas City to Wichita on how to deal with the World Cup attendees the best. She suggested taking that into consideration when discussing this ordinance.

Joe Torkelson said he had heard that Lawrence was not going to be cracking down on the non-registered Airbnbs. He asked what incentive does anyone have to go through the planning commission if there is no recourse for not following through all of the steps in place.

Tina Rakes said the codes department is now a department of 1, instead of a department of 4 when she worked for the city, which makes it hard to catch sometimes.

Cory Venable said the goal of incentivizing is good, it balances it with safety.

Scott Lauridsen thinks that neighborhood input is important.

Jay King asked what the current process is now to get an airbnb.

Stu said they start at Public Works and meet with himself or Russ, and file an application for a conditional use permit. That process allows the neighbors to be able to give their input. Stu said the process has gone very well so far. The process takes about a month, then they fill out a permit, which then requires an inspection.

Jay King asked how to shorten the process.

Stu said that the planning commission would have to meet more than once a month, and the mailers have to be mailed out so many days in advance by state statute.

Tina Rakes gave some suggestions on how to make the short-term rental approval shorter for the time period of the World Cup and suggested doing some outreach as well.

Council would like staff to go out to other cities to see what their ordinances look like and bring back a model ordinance for review.

Susan Pitts returned to the meeting.

3. Ordinance 1525

This ordinance is over RV's. Currently our ordinance allows for one visiting camper for a 30-day period and that it can be stored in your side or rear yard. It is very difficult for emergency services to locate people if they are staying in a camper, and don't know the address, or don't specify they are in a camper at that address. The current ordinance says after 30 days a permit is required, and there are only 30 days allowed to live in it per year.

Scott Lauridsen stated that he thinks there should be a time limit on it, and neighbor input.

City Attorney Shaye says that having guidelines in place to enforce is crucial.

H. Committee Reports

1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Cory Venable

- Reviewed year to date financials and projected year end reserves.
- Jeff is working on getting the 2026 utility costs and usage forecast from KMEA.
- The first meeting in February is when the rate adjustments need to be set.
- Discussed utility bill format change recommendation.
- Baker Tilly is looking at the water and wastewater reserve and policy, and reviewing rates.

Next meeting 11/21/2025 at 7:30am, second floor of City Hall

2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Susan Pitts

Next meeting will be 11/24/2025 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

3. Public Safety - Susan Pitts/Jay King

Next meeting will be 12/09/2025 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

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

Next meeting 11/20/2025 at 9:00am, Public Works Conference Room

5. Strategic Planning-Scott Lauridsen/Julie Constantinescu

Next meeting 11/21/2025 at 10:00am, second floor of City Hall

6. Lake Advisory Committee-Julie Constantinescu/Jay King

Next meeting will be TBD at 6:00pm, Community Center

7. Communications Advisory Board-Susan Pitts/Scott Lauridsen.

Next meeting will be 11/21/2025 at 2:00pm, Community Center

I. City Administrator and Staff Comments

J. Council & Mayor Comments

Mayor Simoneau said he does not have any updates on the waterline.

On the administrators search, the committee has narrowed the selection down. Going forward it is the council's decision on how everything is handled.

K. Executive Session

Cory Venable moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to enter into executive session for the purposes of discussing non-elected personnel with our city attorney, council and mayor for 20 minutes, until 8:25pm.

The Mayor called the regular meeting back to order at 8:25pm.

L. Adjourn

Julie Constantinescu moved and Jay King seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 5-0. Time: 8:25 p.m.

Attest:

Amara M. Packard
City Clerk