

**City of Baldwin City  
Minutes  
Tuesday, January 6, 2026  
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-City Administrator; Amara Packard-City Clerk; Shiloh Afonja-Deputy City Clerk; Mike Patrick-Police Chief; Officer Murphy and Sgt. Owen-Police Department.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

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

1. Minutes 12.16.2025
2. Scheduled Claims List

**D. Public Comment**

**E. Special Reports or Presentations**

Presentation to outgoing Councilmember Susan Pitts and Mayor Casey Simoneau. Mayor Simoneau thanked his wife and kids for all they have sacrificed the last eight years, and for supporting him all the way through. He thanked the city employees who are always ready to jump when asked. Mayor Simoneau thanked the community for all of their willingness to serve, and for showing their support for the community events and projects. He thanked the council for their willingness to serve, and continue serving in different capacities.

Councilmember Susan Pitts let Mayor Simoneau know what a pleasure it has been serving alongside him for the last 8 years, and stated how his leadership will have a tremendous lasting impact. Susan thanked the council for the past 8 years of working together towards a common vision for the city. She also thanked the community that has taught her humility and the importance of listening. In closing, she said that the city staff were like the heartbeat of the city, and thanked them.

Mayor Simoneau presented Councilmember Susan Pitts with a clock engraved with her time on the council, and a glass engraved with the city map. Mayor Simoneau thanked Susan for her immense amount of time given to the city and the dedication for doing what she feels is best for the city.

Councilmember Scott Lauridsen presented Mayor Simoneau with a plaque and glass engraved with the city map on it, and thanked him for the countless hours he has spent working to improve Baldwin City. Scott said his leadership has been at the highest level. As a mayor, you don't have a vote, so you have to get your council members to see your vision. Councilmember Scott said he hopes that Mayor Simoneau continues to stay engaged. He was presented a gavel plaque and glass engraved with the city map. Mayor Simoneau again thanked everyone for all of their support.

Swearing in of Councilmember Jay King, Councilmember Peter Wentz, and Mayor Gerald Cullumber

City Clerk Amara Packard swore each Councilmember Jay King, Councilmember Peter Wentz, and Mayor Gerald Cullumber in and they took their seats.

Mayor Gerald Cullumber thanked Casey Simoneau for being very friendly, professional, understanding and offered his time anytime Gerald needed assistance. He praised Casey for all he has done, and his good character. Mayor Cullumber thanked the council and asked that everyone respect each other and keep moving forward.

## **F. Old Business**

## **G. New Business**

### 1. Election of Council President

Each year a council president has to be elected. Julie Constantinescu nominated Scott Lauridsen because he has been doing such a great job.

Jay King moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Scott Lauridsen as council president. Motion passes 5-0.

### 2. Ordinance 1529-Conditional Use Permit-Short Term Rental-920 Grove

City Administrator Russ Harding gave an overview of the Ordinance; it is for a short-term rental at 920 Grove Street. This was heard at the December 9th planning commission and passed unanimously to go on to city council for final approval.

Scott Lauridsen asked why they always do a /Airbnb when to him that is a commercial enterprise.

City Administrator Russ Harding said they can take out Airbnb and make it a short-term rental.

Scott Lauridsen suggested that this may not be needed if they are not imposing any additional regulations that the city and county code requires.

Jerry Smith-1308 High St.-What is considered short term?

City Administrator Russ Harding stated anywhere from a month or less.

Joe Torkelson, who owns several properties in town along with an Airbnb, asked what is the point

of some having to pay money to follow the code, when others who don't, don't have any repercussions.

Jay King asked if there is not a process for a long-term rental, why is there a process for a short-term rental?

City Attorney Shaye Downing stated that Baldwin City doesn't have any policy currently in place.

Tina Rakes-Baldwin City-stated that she was here when short-term rental became a thing across the country. A conditional use permit is essentially a catch all for anything not covered under the current codes.

City Attorney Shaye Downing said the first thing the city needs to do is figure out if there is a problem that needs to be addressed. If so, there needs to be an ordinance put in place, but then it has to be enforced.

Mayor Gerald Cullumber would like there to be some mechanism in place that allows the Police Chief or Fire Chief, if there are problems at a bed and breakfast or short-term stay, they can revoke their short-term status.

Tina Rakes stated your best way to go about enforcement is by the neighbors. They are good at calling in issues that then you can investigate.

Currently it is \$125.00 to apply for a Conditional Use Permit, and nothing is defined in the codes for a penalty if they don't go through the CUP process.

Jay King said that there should be a fine for those not following the process. He suggested they pass the CUP before them, then they have lots of work ahead of them.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Cory Venable seconded to pass ordinance 1529, removing the Airbnb reference in the ordinance, otherwise as presented. Motion passes 5-0.

Jay King-yes, Peter Wentz-yes, Cory Venable-yes, Scott Lauridsen-yes and Julie Constantinescu-yes.

### 3. Final Plat for Daycare

This is the final plat for the proposed daycare off of Ridge Lane and N. 400 Road. The plat meets all of the requirements. It went before the planning commission and was approved.

Peter Wentz moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve the final plat for the daycare facility located at Ridge Lane and N. 400 Road. Motion passes 5-0.

### 4. Ordinance 1530-Municipal Cost Index for utilities

Currently it is set the MCI would go into effect January 1. The budget and finance committee discussed that it would make more sense if the city waited until February 1st to allow the council to look at the full fiscal year.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to accept ordinance number 1530 as presented. Motion passes 5-0.

Julie Constantinescu-yes, Scott Lauridsen-yes, Cory Venable-yes, Peter Wentz-yes and Jay King-yes.

### 5. MPO Appointment

As discussed at the last meeting, the city needs to appoint a council member to the Metropolitan Planning Organization. This organization looks at the bike plans, transportation 2050 plan, vision zero safety plan, that encompasses all of Douglas County. Every third year, the Baldwin

representative has voting rights, and 2026 is the year for Baldwin. This group meets monthly to quarterly by zoom. Peter Wentz was nominated by the rest of the council.

Jay King moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Peter Wentz to the MPO as the Baldwin City Council representative. Motion passes 5-0.

#### **H. Committee Reports**

##### 1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Cory Venable

- Discussed MCI
- Talked about potential rate increases needed for 2026
- Electric rate increase of MCI should be sufficient for 2026
- Water rate, the pass through is going to be 8.9%
- There will be a rate forum before the 1st council meeting in February

Next meeting 1/08/2026 at 10:00am, second floor of City Hall

##### 2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Open

Next meeting will be 1/26/2026 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

##### 3. Public Safety - Open/Jay King

Next meeting will be TBD at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

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

Next meeting 1/08/2026 at 9:00am, Public Works Conference Room

##### 5. Strategic Planning-Scott Lauridsen/Julie Constantinescu

- With a new council, should plan a strategic planning workshop

Next meeting TBD at 10:00am, second floor of City Hall

##### 6. Lake Advisory Committee-Julie Constantinescu/Jay King

- Possibility of two grants
- Received more data on the spillway, possibility of moving forward with the spillway
- Public Works went out and cleaned up this week, looks really good

Next meeting TBD at 6:00pm, Community Center

#### **I. City Administrator and Staff Comments**

#### **J. Council & Mayor Comments**

Jay King said that the first grant was a matching \$75,000.00 grant and the second was a non-matching \$60,000.00.

Mayor Cullumber said that he will be switching up a couple of the committees and will have conversations with those affected within the next week. He thanked everyone again for their support.

#### **K. Executive Session**

**L. Adjourn**

Julie Constantinescu moved and Peter Wentz seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 5-0. Time: 8:14 p.m.

Attest:

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Amara M. Packard  
City Clerk