

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 Gerald Cullumber presiding.

Present were Council Members: Jay King, Peter Wentz, Cory Venable, Scott Lauridsen and Julie Constantinescu.

Also, attending: Russ Harding-City Administrator; Amara Packard-City Clerk; Shiloh Afonja-Deputy City Clerk; Mike Pattrick-Police Chief; Terry Baker-Fire Chief.

B. Approval of Agenda

Julie Constantinescu moved and Scott Lauridsen 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 1.06.2026
2. Scheduled Claims List

D. Public Comment

E. Special Reports or Presentations

F. Old Business

G. New Business

1. Appointment of City Treasurer

Mayor Cullumber nominated Russ Harding, City Administrator for the appointment of the city treasurer.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Russ Harding as city treasurer. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Approval of City Judge

Mayor Cullumber nominated Mack Curry for the city judge.

Mack introduced himself, he was appointed last year and hopes to continue this year.

Peter Wentz moved and Cory Venable seconded to approve Mack Curry as the city judge. Motion passes 5-0.

3. Appointment of City Attorney

Mayor Cullumber nominated Jessica Wortham for the city attorney.

Jessica introduced herself to the council and provided them with her resume and stated she would be honored to represent the City of Baldwin.

Scott Lauridsen thanked Jessica for her willingness to serve and asked if she had plans to accelerate her understanding of Kansas Municipal Law.

Jessica said that she has been in touch with the League of Kansas Municipalities for additional training opportunities and she has signed up for various classes as well as having other resources through networking that she can reach out to.

Jay King asked the mayor how many interviews he did for this position and asked to delay this appointment and put out an RFP to see if there were more people interested.

A long discussion between the council ensued.

Jay King moved and Cory Venable seconded to postpone the appointment until an RFP is done.

Motion failed 2-3. Julie Constantinescu-no, Scott Lauridsen-no and Peter Wentz-no. Julie Constantinescu agreed with Jay that going forward there should be a better policy in place.

Cory Venable moved and Peter Wentz seconded to accept Jessica Wortham as city attorney. Motion passes 4-1. Julie Constantinescu-yes, Scott Lauridsen-yes, Cory Venable-yes, Peter Wentz-yes, and Jay King-no.

4. Appointment of Police Chief

Mayor Cullumber nominated Mike Patrick as Chief of Police.

Chief Patrick thanked the council for the last 8 years as chief and said he hoped to continue forward.

Jay King moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Mike Patrick as Police Chief. Motion passes 5-0.

5. Appointment of Fire Chief

Mayor Cullumber nominated Terry Baker as Fire Chief.

Chief Baker thanked the council for the last 9 years as chief and said he hopes to continue forward.

Peter Wentz moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Terry Baker as the fire chief of Baldwin City. Motion passes 5-0.

6. Appointment of City Clerk

Mayor Cullumber nominated Amara Packard as City Clerk.

Amara said she hoped to continue as City Clerk.

Jay King moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Amara Packard as City Clerk.

Motion passes 5-0.

7. Appointment of City Depositories

Mayor Cullumber suggests retaining Mid America Bank, Kansas State Bank, and Baldwin State Bank as the city depositories.

Cory Venable moved and Scott Lauridsen seconded to approve Baldwin State Bank, Kansas State Bank, and Mid America Bank as the city depositories. Motion passes 5-0.

8. Appointment of Budget and Finance Committee

Mayor Cullumber nominated Scott Lauridsen as chair, Peter Wentz, and Dave Hill as citizen seats for the Budget and Finance Committee.

Cory Venable stated, that as the only person being removed from a committee, that his 6 years of experience and dedication is something the city shouldn't want to lose, and does not want to be removed.

Mayor Cullumber explained that he feels that there should be overlapping so if neither of them run again in two years, there wouldn't be two brand new people having to learn it on their own. This allows for a current member to teach a new councilmember what they have learned over the years on this committee.

A long conversation continued.

Julie Constantinescu said that she has always felt, during her time as a councilmember, that a citizen representative should be a citizen of the City of Baldwin.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to appoint himself, Peter Wentz and Dave Hill to the finance committee. Motion passes 3-2. Jay King-no, and Cory Venable-no.

The new attorney stated that each individual person needed to be appointed and voted on.

Jay King moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Scott Lauridsen as the chair of the budget finance committee. Scott Lauridsen abstained. Motion passes 4-0.

Mayor Cullumber nominates Peter Wentz to the budget and finance committee.

Julie Constantinescu moved and Scott seconded to approve Peter Wentz on the budget and finance committee. Motion passes 2-1. Jay King-no. Peter Wentz and Cory Venable abstain.

Jay King moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Dave Hill as the citizen on the budget and finance committee. Motion passes 4-1. Julie Constantinescu-no.

9. Appointment of Community Development Committee

Mayor Cullumber nominated Cory Venable as the chair, Peter Wentz, and Brian Schultz as the citizen seat.

Jay King moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Cory Venable as the chair on the community development committee. Motion passes 4-0. Cory Venable abstained.

Cory Venable moved and Jay King seconded to approve Peter Wentz to the community development committee. Motion passes 4-0. Peter Wentz abstained.

Cory Venable moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Brian Schultz as the citizen on the community development committee. Motion passes 4-1. Julie Constantinescu-no.

10. Appointment of Public Safety Committee

Mayor Cullumber nominated Jay King as the chair, Cory Venable, and James Denney as the citizen seat.

Scott Lauridsen moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Jay King as the chair on the public safety committee. Motion passes 4-0. Jay King abstained.

Jay King moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Cory Venable to the public safety committee. Motion passes 4-0. Cory Venable abstained.

Jay King moved and Cory Venable seconded to approve James Denney as the citizen on the public safety committee. Motion passes 5-0.

11. Appointment of Public Works/Utilities Committee

Mayor Cullumber nominated Julie Constantinescu as the chair, Jay King, and Dan Riney as the citizen seat.

Jay King moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Julie Constantinescu as the chair of the public works/utilities committee. Motion passes 4-0. Julie Constantinescu abstained.

Cory Venable moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve Jay King to the public works/utilities committee. Motion passes 4-0. Jay King abstained.

Julie Constantinescu moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve Dan Riney as the citizen on the public works/utilities committee. Motion passes 5-0.

12. Appointment of Strategic Planning Committee

Mayor Cullumber nominated Scott Lauridsen as the chair of the strategic planning committee.

Julie Constantinescu moved and Jay King seconded to approve Scott Lauridsen for the strategic planning committee. Motion passes 4-0. Scott Lauridsen abstained.

Mayor Cullumber nominated Julie Constantinescu to the strategic planning committee.

Peter Wentz moved and Cory Venable seconded to approve Julie Constantinescu for the strategic planning committee. Motion passes 4-0. Julie Constantinescu abstained.

Scott Lauridsen announced that any citizen interested in being on that committee should reach out to Mayor Cullumber.

H. Committee Reports

1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Cory Venable

- Reviewed 2025 utility ending reserve fund balances.
- Discussed 2026 utility rates
- Community form regarding utility rates is Feb. 3rd at 6:00 at Community Center.
- Went over the MCI

Next meeting 1/22/2026 at 10:00am, second floor of City Hall

2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Open

- Common Consumption

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

- 50 tons of salt was delivered for the winter season right before Christmas and will receive 50 tons more.
- PW crew installed 3 culverts at the property on Eisenhower St.
- Signage has been installed at the Heritage and Trailview subdivisions.
- City and Rec Dept staff met with Jackson pool to do a walk thru. They have agreed to do noted repairs.
- PW crew cleaned up at the Spring Creek Lake. Old pallets, bed springs and misc items were dumped on the west side of the lake.
- Repaired 2 broken water meters due to cold temps.
- Received notice from KDHE that the Heritage subdivision was applying for permitting to extend sanitary sewer into Phase II. Likely starting this spring.
- KC First Aid will begin servicing our med cabinets, truck kits and AED's. KC First Aid is about 50% of the price of the previous company that was being used.
- New Substation:
- Grounding grid, fencing and gravel has been completed.
- Auxiliary station power was installed along with the transfer switch, load center and some lighting. The high side breaker and the steel structure were installed.
- Mid States came to replace the switch that stuck during the extreme cold on the voltage regulator. The transformer had to be taken off line to complete the repair, so the power plant provided power for about 5 hours that day while repair was being made.
- Another meter at Baker wasn't being billed a demand charge for about a year and a half. A manual reading will be done on that meter until troubleshooting is completed. A scheduled audit will be done of all large customers' demand accounts to verify the accuracy of the billing.
- Evergy will be replacing all of the solar inverters with a different manufacturer's product.

Next meeting 2/12/2026 at 9:00am, Public Works Conference Room

5. Strategic Planning-Scott Lauridsen/Julie Constantinescu

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

6. Lake Advisory Committee-Julie Constantinescu/Jay King

Next meeting TBD at 6:00pm, Community Center

Mayor Cullumber thanked Jay for doing a very nice job in that committee, clearly stating the position of the city in regards to finances etc.

I. City Administrator and Staff Comments

City Administrator Russ Harding just wanted to make sure that everyone watching was aware of the community forum on utilities on February 2nd, at 6:00 at the Community Center right before the council meeting.

J. Council & Mayor Comments

Councilmember Peter Wentz asked what types of communication has been done in regards to the

public forum.

Russ said the city has sent out mailers in the utility bills, facebook, website, and emails went out to those that have emailed utility bills.

The forum will be live streamed.

Jay King said that even though conversations got heated, that is what makes a healthy council. Each councilmember feels they are doing what is best for the citizens, and that is what is important. He expressed that he hopes no one takes anything personal this evening.

K. Executive Session

L. Adjourn

Julie Constantinescu moved and Jay King seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 5-0. Time: 8:16 p.m.

Attest:

Amara M. Packard
City Clerk