

City of Baldwin City
Minutes
Tuesday, March 3, 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; City Attorney-Jessica Wortham; Lynn Meador-Communications; and Lt. Owen-Police Department.

B. Approval of Agenda

Cory Venable 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

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

1. Minutes 2.17.2026
2. Scheduled Claims List

D. Public Comment

E. Special Reports or Presentations

Lumberyard Arts Center - Jeanette Blackmar

Jeanette thanked Councilwoman Julie Constantinescu for her, and the city administration's help in getting the Quilt Capital of Kansas signs installed on the highway.

Jeanette along with the Quilt Capital programming team gave an update on the social and economic impact in their textile arts programming that is a partnership between the Lumberyard Arts Center and Quilters Paradise.

Sharon Vesecky, Ruthie Rodden, Angie Spielman, Liz Granberg-Jerome, Janet Anderson-Story, each gave their history with the team and what they have participated in and the classes they teach.

F. Old Business

1. Ordinance 1531 - Gas Franchise

Scott Lauridsen gave an overview of the things they discussed in committee regarding the gas franchise fee. The franchise fee covers the right to operate and use public right of ways and is paid by the customer not the utility. Scott stressed the importance of having money in the general fund for unexpected expenses that come up, especially in regards to Public Safety. We are currently at 3% which brought in approximately 1 mil or \$57,000.00 last year.

Russ Harding reiterated what Scott said about the importance of funding the general fund which essentially funds the emergency services.

City Attorney Jessica gave the council an overview of some of the bills that are under review at the House. House Bill 2745 did pass the house and is now at the senate, which would put a 3% cap on property tax. There is another bill 2745 that could change how our bond rating is figured going forward. House bill 244, the restroom act will require possible changes with signage.

Council discussed the pros and cons of raising the franchise fee 3% to the gas company. Cory Venable suggested raising the gas franchise to 6% then lowering one of the franchise fees on a city utility that same amount. After a long discussion, the council decided to table this discussion until the next meeting.

G. New Business

1. Kansas State Bank

The city has an account at Kansas State Bank that has been open for many years, with signers on the account that have not been a part of the city for many years. The city would like to remove the current signers, and add new check signers.

Cory Venable moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to remove the current signers; James Craig, Mark Eldridge, and Victor Eugene Nelson on checking account #134147 at Kansas State Bank, in the name of City of Baldwin City PBC, and add new check signers Russell Harding and Amara Packard. Motion carried with a vote of 5 yes and 0 no.

2. KMEA Director-2

There are currently three individuals who represent Baldwin City in director positions. Russ Harding, Jeff Winkler, and Jay King. Russ will need to be reappointed to continue in that position.

Julie Constantinescu moved, and Jay King seconded to re-appoint Russ Harding as the KMEA Director-2. Motion carried with a vote of 5 yes and 0 no.

H. Committee Reports

1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Peter Wentz

- Baker Tilly went over January financials
- Discussed waterline project
- Utility cost relief
- ECKAN
- Refreshing website to show some resources
- Lease for the Bullpen
- Old public works building

Next meeting 3/05/2026 at 9:00am, second floor of City Hall

2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Peter Wentz

- State ABC agents came to discuss common consumption areas and answered questions. Jay King clarified for residents that this is specifically for approved special events. It is not every day.

Next meeting will be 3/23/2026 at 4:00pm, second floor of City Hall

3. Public Safety - Jay King/Cory Venable

Next meeting will be 3/26/2026 at 9:00am, second floor of City Hall

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

Next meeting 3/12/2026 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-Jay King/Julie Constantinescu

- Going after a county level grant, state level grant, and a federal grant.
- Discussed the trails
- New member is helping revamp the disc golf course

Next meeting 4/7/2026 at 6:00pm, Executive Room at the Community Center

Peter Wentz offered to help with the hole mapping for the disc golf course as he has done that for others before, if they are interested.

I. City Administrator and Staff Comments

Russ Harding gave an update on the water line grants. Nothing has been released yet, but hoped timelines are released in the next week or so.

Jessica let the council know that there is lots of testimony going on in Topeka, and they will start to vote on the bills soon. The next step would be for them to go before the governor to see if she signs them. She will update the council as there is more information.

J. Council & Mayor Comments

Jay King stated that from the earlier committee report regarding trying to find help for low-income residents, that the blue-collar workers are also struggling without much assistance. He asked if we could look into helping the blue-collar workers struggling as well.

Mayor Cullumber said that they have updated the city website, and put the committees under the councilmember's pictures. He said that they have started to purge some outdated warrants.

Mayor Cullumber wished Cory Venable a happy birthday!

K. Executive Session

L. Adjourn

Julie Constantinescu moved and Cory Venable seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 5-0. Time: 8:52 p.m.

Attest:

Amara M. Packard
City Clerk