

City of Baldwin City
Minutes
Tuesday, March 17, 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 Chief Patrick-Police Department.

B. Approval of Agenda

Julie Constantinescu moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

C. Consent Agenda

Scott Lauridsen moved and Julie Constantinescu seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried with a vote of 4 yes and 0 no.

1. Minutes 3.03.2026
2. Scheduled Claims List

D. Public Comment

E. Special Reports or Presentations

Chief Patrick introduced Adonus Rideaux as a new officer in his department. Adonus grew up in Baldwin and has served this community volunteering on the fire department before joining the police force.

Chief Patrick announced Officer Ace Butrum has been promoted to Sergeant in his department. He was unable to make the meeting due to a commitment with the Air National Guard.

Chief Patrick announced Sgt. Brad Owen has been promoted to Lieutenant in his department. The chief said Lt. Owen has been his right hand man since he began his career with the Baldwin City Police Department 8 years ago, and is a huge asset to the department.

City Administrator Russ Harding introduced the new Community Development Director, Pat Toth. The council welcomed him to the team.

F. Old Business

1. Ordinance 1531 - Gas Franchise

Scott Lauridsen said that they took this agenda item back to budget and finance to discuss the option of trying to match the offset of the gas franchise increase. If they took off 1% from the electric franchise fee, it would be very close annually, to what the 3% gas franchise increase would be. Essentially they will net each other out. Council will need to approve an ordinance before July to amend the electric franchise fee.

Cory Venable moved and Peter Wentz seconded to approve ordinance 1531. Motion passes 4 yes and 0 no. Roll call; Julie Constantinescu-yes, Scott Lauridsen-yes, Cory Venable-yes, and Peter Wentz-yes.

G. New Business

1. Lease renewal-Bullpen

Cory Venable recused himself.

Niki, who owns the Bullpen, asked for a couple of changes to the proposed lease. The proposed lease was a three year, and she requested a five year lease. The three main concerns with the lease is the term, monthly payment and property tax.

Niki said that by increasing her costs by that much, they are pricing her out.

Scott Lauridsen suggested keeping the rent at \$1000.00 for the first three years, plus the property tax, year four, rent would go up to \$1100.00 plus property tax, and the 5th year rent would go up to \$1200.00 plus property tax.

Niki declined that offer. The city attorney, Jessica Wortham, went over the options the city could choose to vote on if she was not going to be renewing her lease.

There was a long discussion back and forth on including the property tax into the lease. The city does not pay property tax on city owned buildings. Since that building is rented out to a for profit business, the city is being charged property tax on the building.

Scott Lauridsen made a motion to amend the commercial lease agreement in the packet, changing the lease term from 3 years to 5 years, same start date. The monthly lease payment for the first 3 years, year 1,2, and 3 would be \$1000.00 a month, year 4 would increase by \$100.00, and year 5 would increase by another \$100.00 plus property tax, beginning the first year.

There was not a second, and discussions started on who is responsible for repairs of the building. The city attorney added language to the lease that states “the landlord shall be responsible for repairs including the roof, the HVAC, plumbing, exterior walls and foundation, should repairs or replacement be needed due to normal wear and tear. All other repairs are solely the responsibility of the tenant including repairs regarding negligent acts causing damage to the roof, HVAC, plumbing, exterior walls and foundation. The landlord shall not be responsible for repairs related to flooding.”

Scott Lauridsen made a motion and Julie Constantinescu seconded to propose a lease term of 5 years beginning April 1st, 2026. The base monthly lease payments of \$1000.00 monthly for the first 3 years, plus property taxes. The fourth year would be \$1,100.00 a month plus property taxes. The fifth year would be \$1,200.00 a month plus property taxes. Also amend number seven; maintenance and repair to read; the landlord shall be responsible for repairs including the roof, HVAC, plumbing, exterior walls and foundation, should repairs or replacement be needed due to normal wear and tear and/or acts of God. All other repairs are solely the responsibility of the tenant including repairs regarding negligent acts causing damage to the roof, HVAC, plumbing, exterior walls and foundation. Landlords shall not be responsible for repairs relating to flooding unless it is from normal wear and tear and/or an act of God. Motion passes 3 yes and 0 no.

Niki told the council that they don't have a rental, but if they did, and went to their tenant and told them that next month they were going to raise their rent by \$340.00 and they can't afford it, they will be out. She said that she will not be signing the lease.

Mayor Cullumber thanked Cory Venable for recusing himself and explained that he did that so there could not be any talk of being impartial, having favoritism, or anything of the sort.

H. Committee Reports

1. Budget and Finance - Scott Lauridsen/Peter Wentz

- Bullpen lease
- Parking lot lease (gravel parking lot, south of the paved parking lot at the depot)
Jerry Smith-1302 High St. said he goes over there when they have cross country meets and that it is always full.
- Old Public Works building lease
- Utility relief
- Franchise fee reduction ordinance

Next meeting 3/20/2026 at 9:00am, second floor of City Hall

2. Community Development - Cory Venable/Peter Wentz

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

Julie Constantinescu congratulated the high schoolers that won state basketball this year!

- Contacted a company regarding the purchase of the street sweeper. If not bid, will put on Purple Wave this Spring.
- Chip seal list has been submitted to BG Consultants. Bid opening will be April 2nd. Submit to council April 7th or 21st.
- Common Consumption area signage proof from National Sign has been received. Signs and barricades for \$3800.
- All park restrooms will be open around April 1st.
- Bid from Hawkins for the Pool Chlorine Injection Project is \$7,310. Bid included tanks and installation. Equipment ordered and will be operating this season.
- Bid from Norris Equipment in Gardner was \$18,950 for a new mower at the cemetery.
- Ads went out for summer/seasonal work.
- Repaired one leak on the 16" mainline to Lawrence.
- Midwest Coating inspected the leak in the roof of the community center. Conduit was found that could have been the cause. Resealed conduit. After the last rain, there was water in the building again. Lloyd Builders has been contacted.
- **New Substation:**
- Mid States employees have been working on items to include: copper connections between the high and low side structures to the transformer. Mounting components inside the switch gear enclosures. Additional 120vt circuits inside and outside the building. Cabling for the UPS system.
- Pat's crew continues to make good progress on setting poles and moving services to the new poles.

- Search continues for fiber installations for the substation. Can't locate what is available on the City owned fiber.
- Cromwell Solar is requesting a solar permit that does not follow our current ordinance.
- Every crews are working on the project of replacing all the inverters at the solar site. The design and number of inverters is changing because there are no direct replacement inverters available from a different manufacturer. Some new conduits will be trenched to accommodate the new design.
- A tentative date for the meter relocation has been pushed back to April 7th. The power plant will be generating our power when the meter is to be relocated. Estimated at 12 hours.
- KMEA was able to take control of all RECs from the hydro project. At current values, the past unsold value at approximately \$2700 and future values at approximately \$1700.

Next meeting 4/09/2026 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
Next meeting 4/7/2026 at 6:00pm, Executive Room at the Community Center

I. City Administrator and Staff Comments

Russ Harding said we are still researching waterline grants for the replacement line.

City Attorney Jessica said that legislation session ends April 10th. She said the last two weeks are the busiest so there should be new laws being voted on over the next couple of weeks.

J. Council & Mayor Comments

Mayor Cullumber said he knows it was a tough night for the council, but he knows they will do what's best for the city and the community.

K. Executive Session

L. Adjourn

Julie Constantinescu moved and Cory Venable seconded to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passes 4-0. Time: 8:46 p.m.

Attest:

Amara M. Packard
City Clerk