

**COMMISSION ON PUBLIC WORKS/UTILITIES
COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL
JANUARY 13, 2026
6:45 P.M.**

The Commission on Public Works/Utilities met in regular session, Chair Clough presiding.
On roll call: all members present.

The minutes of the previous meeting were declared approved.

Director of Public Works Friemoth reported on two burials at the Cemetery, snow removal-plowing, hauling, clearing sidewalks and sanding, repaired the basement urinal at City Hall, patching potholes, removing Christmas decorations, equipment maintenance, Water Department-daily testing and well rounds, meter change outs, a WIS DNR inspection was completed on January 2, 2026-no violations were found, formal report pending, working on inventory and audit information, Well No. 3 scheduled for rehab with full replacement of pumping equipment, Sewer Department-daily testing and treatment plant rounds, lift station maintenance and inspections, sewer main and manhole inspections, snow removal at the treatment plant and lift stations, working on inventory and audit information, MSA staff visited the treatment plant to assist with the Facilities Plan and Operational Needs Assessment and no new applications have been received for the open Water/Wastewater position.

Jerilyn St. Amand thanked the City crew for filling the potholes and asked what the useful life of asphalt pavement is, stated she listens to the County Board meetings on her phone via Web-X, it is a good option if you can't attend a meeting.

Motion Poeschel, second Rochester, to adjourn. All Aye.

Daniel M. Clough, Chair

Rex R. Roehl, Clerk

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**COMMON COUNCIL
COUNCIL ROOM
JANUARY 13, 2026
7:00 P.M.**

The Common Council met in regular session, Mayor Poeschel presiding. On roll call: all members present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The minutes of the previous meeting were declared approved.

Council Member Petkovsek reported on the January 8, 2026 meeting of the Personnel Committee regarding: 1) discussion on and recommendation to increase the Part-time Police Officer wage to \$26.50 per hour, 2) discussion on and referral of Police Department job descriptions to the League of Wisconsin Municipalities for legal review, 3) discussion on and tabling of the draft Transitional Organization Chart, 4) discussion on, approval of and referral of the draft Ordinance creating the City Administrator/Director of Public Works position to the City Attorney for legal review, 5) discussion on and referral of the other City job descriptions to the League of Wisconsin Municipalities for legal review, 6) a closed session on interviewing and promotion for Administrator/Director of Public Works position, 7) reconvening into open session, 8) recommendation on a split vote to recommend that the Mayor move to the Common Council the appointment of Luke Friemoth as City Administrator/Director of Public Works and 9) discussion on the vacant Public Works/Utilities position.

Council Member Clough reported on the January 13, 2026 meeting of the Commission on Public Works/Utilities regarding current activities.

Mayor Poeschel declared all reports filed as presented with the City Clerk.

Jerilyn St. Amand stated it is a very big mistake for the City to go to an Administrator position, what will it cost for attorney and accountant fees, where does all the City's money go, when we can't fund our Police and Fire Departments, she thanked the Johnsons for their donation, there is a lot of stuff going on in this town, what is the wage rate for the Administrator position, she doesn't have Charter and nothing is posted on the website.

Diane Murphy stated the change in City government should wait as there will be a new Fourth Ward Council Member in a few months, the Police and Fire Chiefs should have been involved in the discussion, you need cooperation from all departments, not choosing one person to oversee all, there are people who want to work for the City, this should be tabled until after the April election, there are two Council Members against the change. The Lisenby apartments are almost full.

Mayor Poeschel asked if there were any questions on the Personnel Committee item (1).

Motion Clough, second Gelhaus, to accept the recommendation to increase the Part-time Police Officer wage to \$26.50 per hour. All Aye.

Mayor Poeschel presented the School District of Neillsville request to use and temporarily close City streets for the annual Homecoming Parade scheduled for September 25, 2026 from the School down on E. Fourth Street to Hewett Street to E. Sixth Street to Court Street to E. Fifth Street to the School.

Motion Rochester, second Clough, to grant the request. All Aye.

City Clerk Roehl reported on receiving a \$1,500 donation from Robert and Elsbeth Johnson for Police Department radios.

Motion Neville, second Petkovsek, to accept and appropriate \$1,500 to Account No. 52100 Police Department Administration and to thank Robert and Elsbeth Johnson for their donation. All Aye.

City Clerk Roehl reported on receiving a \$50,000 donation from the American Endowment Foundation Donor Advised Fund on behalf of an Anonymous donor for the Neillsville Area Fire Department.

Motion Petkovsek, second Clough, to accept and appropriate \$50,000 to Account No. 57720 Public Safety-Fire Department Outlay and to thank the American Endowment Foundation Anonymous donor for their donation. All Aye.

Mayor Poeschel read the following ordinance.

ORDINANCE NO. 1083

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER § 101 OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.

THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEILLSVILLE DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SEC. 101-XX CITY ADMINISTRATOR/PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Office of the City Administrator/Public Works Director. In order to provide the City of Neillsville with a more efficient, effective and responsible government under a system of a part-time Mayor and part-time Common Council (hereinafter referred to as "Council") at a time when City government is becoming increasingly complex, there is hereby created the office of City Administrator/Public Works Director for the City of Neillsville (hereinafter referred to as "Administrator/Public Works Director").

- A. Appointment, Term and Removal. The Administrator/Public Works Director shall be appointed on the basis of merit with regard to training, experience and administrative ability. For the purpose of selecting the candidate, the Personnel Committee shall

make a recommendation to the Mayor and the Mayor shall forward the candidate to City Council. The Administrator/Public Works Director shall hold office for an indefinite term subject to removal at any time by a majority of the entire City Council. The Administrator/Public Works Director shall be subject to a mutually agreed upon "Employment Agreement" by both parties.

- B. Duties.** The Administrator/Public Works Director, subject to the limitations defined in ordinances of the City of Neillsville and Wisconsin State Statutes, shall be the administrative officer of the City for the proper administration of the business affairs of the City. The duties of the Administrator/Director of Public Works shall be as described in the job description as approved by the City Council and as filed with the City Clerk.

Duane G. Poeschel, Mayor

Rex R. Roehl, Clerk

Council Member Clough asked if the City Attorney had reviewed the ordinance.

Mayor Poeschel replied yes.

Motion Neville, second Petkovsek, that Ordinance No. 1083 be adopted. Council Members Neville, Petkovsek and Rochester-Aye. Council Members Clough and Gelhaus-Nay. 3-Aye, 2-Nay. Motion carried.

Mayor Poeschel stated based on the recommendation he received from the Personnel Committee, he recommends the appointment of Luke Friemoth as City Administrator/Director of Public Works effective May 1, 2026.

Council Member Rochester asked if the City could do a probation period.

Council Member Petkovsek stated that there would be an employment contract, there is not an official probationary period, as the position is an at-will employee.

Council Member Rochester suggested a six-month probationary period.

Motion Gelhaus, second Rochester, to add a six-month probationary period. All Aye.

Motion Neville, second Rochester, to appoint Luke Friemoth as City Administrator/Director of Public Works effective May 1, 2026 with a six-month probationary period.

Council Member Clough stated that the ordinance that was passed states the duties as described in the job description as approved by the City Council. The Council has not approved the job description.

Mayor Poeschel stated the job description is forthcoming, it is currently going through legal review.

Council Member Gelhaus asked when will the review be completed and requested tabling the appointment until after that.

Mayor Poeschel called the vote. Council Members Neville, Rochester and Petkovsek-Aye. Council Members Gelhaus and Clough-Nay. 3-Aye, 2-Nay. Motion carried.

Chief of Police Mankowski stated currently, City ordinance prohibits the sale, service, consumption, or possession of open containers of alcoholic beverages on any street, sidewalk, alley, public parking lot, highway, or other public property. This ordinance from a law enforcement perspective addresses a long-standing problem. Citizens have effectively been permitted to ignore the ordinance for years, placing officers in a difficult position. Non-enforcement creates a poor public perception of the Police Department, while enforcement results in complaints and frustration over a rule that many residents view as

unrealistic in these settings. Clarifying the ordinance removes the officers from being perceived as the “bad guys” and restores consistency and credibility.

Mayor Poeschel stated this ordinance will clarify it and address the Chief’s concerns.

Mayor Poeschel read the following ordinance.

ORDINANCE NO. 1084

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION § 161-20 OUTSIDE CONSUMPTION.

THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEILLSVILLE DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 161-20 Outside consumption is repealed and recreated to read as follows.

SEC. 161-20 OUTSIDE CONSUMPTION

(A). Alcoholic beverages in public areas. It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or serve, or offer to sell or serve, or to consume, or to carry or expose to view any open container of any alcohol beverage upon any street, sidewalk, alley, public parking lot, highway, cemetery, public playground, or other public area within the City or on private property without the owner's consent, except that this section shall not apply during those times one hour before and after a parade authorized by the Common Council. The provisions of this section may be waived by the Common Council for duly authorized events.

(B). City Parks. No person shall possess or consume alcoholic beverages in any City-owned park except between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

(C). Definitions. As used in this section, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE

Include all ardent, spirituous, distilled, or vinous liquors, liquids or compounds, whether medicated, proprietary, patented, or not, and by whatever name called, as well as all liquors and liquids made by the alcoholic fermentation of an infusion in potable water of barley malt and hops, with or without unmalted grains or decorticated and degerminated grains or sugar, which contain 1/2 of 1% or more of alcohol by volume and which are fit for use for beverage purposes.

PUBLIC AREA

Shall be construed to mean any location within the City which is open to access to persons not requiring specific permission of the owner to be at such location including all parking lots serving commercial establishments.

Section 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 3. Should any portion of this ordinance be declared invalid, or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of said ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provisions.

Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect upon the date of publication as provided in Section 62.11(4)(a), Wis. Stats.

Duane G. Poeschel, Mayor

Rex R. Roehl, Clerk

Motion Rochester, second Clough, that Ordinance No. 1084 be adopted. All Aye.

Chief of Police Mankowski requested signage for the parks.

Chief of Police Mankowski reported on training, squad car maintenance, parking enforcement, citations, warnings, office activities, officer activities, officer assists, business patrols and contract policing.

City Clerk Roehl reported the Wisconsin Department of Revenue has certified the creation of City of Neillsville Tax Incremental District (TID) No. 5 as a TID Type 6 – mixed use district, base year January 1, 2025, with a maximum life to July 29, 2045.

Tavern Operator’s License Applications:
Kristine K. Bieneck-Gurney and Michelle L. Kennedy

Motion Neville, second Rochester, to grant all the listed licenses. All Aye.

Motion Clough, second Neville that City Bills Nos. 1141 and 1142 (2025) and 1 to 61 (2026) in the amount of \$2,419.979.11 be paid. All Aye.

Motion Petkovsek, second Rochester, to adjourn. All Aye.

Duane G. Poeschel, Mayor

Rex R. Roehl, Clerk

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