

City of Wendell
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
September 4, 2025

Mayor Rebecca Vipperman called the regular meeting of the Wendell City Council to order at 6:30 PM. Council members present were Council President BJ Marshall; Councilwoman Carolyn McRoberts; Councilman Juan Gonzales; and Councilman Donald Dunn. City Attorney Tim Stover was also present.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Councilman Gonzales made a motion to approve the August 7 Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented. seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts–Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

Councilwoman McRoberts made a motion to approve the August 21 Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts–Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

BILLS

Councilwoman McRoberts made a motion to approve the bills in the amount of \$28,118.00. **Councilman Gonzales** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

NEW BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

Consideration of Waiving Building Permits Fees-Wendell High School Indoor Hitting/Pitching Building

Josh Prince, head baseball coach at Wendell High School, was present to request the building permit fees for the new hitting/pitching building at the high school be waived by the city. He stated that it would be used for both baseball and softball. **City Clerk Karri French** stated that she had received confirmation that the county already waived the county's building permit fees for this project that the council will be considering waiving the city's portion of the building permit fees. After a brief discussion, **Councilman Gonzales** made a motion to waive the City of Wendell's building permit fees for the Wendell High School's hitting/pitching building permit (BP-25-19). **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

Consideration of Simplot Water Extension Project

Vic Conrad, representing JR Simplot, was present to ask to tie the new Simplot building to the city's water. Simplot has postponed a public hearing with the county after the Rural Fire Department, and the City of Wendell raised concerns regarding the new building. The city raised concerns over the effect the height and size of the structure may have on nearby properties. The Rural Fire Department raised concerns due to the current availability or access to resources in the area if the Rural Fire Department were to be called to an event at the site due to new building's size and height. He stated that he talked to **Rural Fire Chief Bob Bailey** and **City of Wendell Public Works Director Steve Devereaux** to discuss how potentially tying into city water might be accomplished and if this might resolve the issues cited by the Rural Fire Department. He stated that after discussions with **Rural Fire Chief Bob Bailey**, and if approved, Simplot commits to installing 5 fire hydrants. As part of this commitment, Vic Conrad asked: 1. The city allows Simplot to extend their water system into the city's water system and connect it to the new fire hydrants. 2. The City of Wendell withdraws its objection to Simplot's new building located in the City of Wendell's Area of Impact. 3. The Rural Fire Department submit comments updating its opinion. **Vic Conrad** also asked what improvements the city would require from Simplot to tie into the city's water and what future needs would be. **City Attorney Tim Stover** recommended the city require Simplot to agree to annexation and a development agreement to tie into the city's water. **Vic Conrad** asked what the timeline for annexation would be. **City Attorney Tim Stover** recommended that an annexation happen quickly. **Rural Fire Chief Bob Bailey** stated he would update the department's comments regarding the Simplot building. After discussion, **Councilman Gonzales** made a motion to accept the Simplot Water Extension project contingent on execution of Simplot's annexation and all parties agreeing to a development agreement. **Councilwoman McRoberts** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; Councilwoman **Marshall-Aye**, **Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye**, **Councilman Gonzales-Aye** and **Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

Consideration of Gooding County Variance Letter-Simplot

Mayor Vipperman stated that Vic Conrad, representing JR Simplot, has asked the city to withdraw its objection to the height variance for their new building. The county has a height restriction of 40ft, and the new building would be 60ft in height with an elevator that would reach 90ft in height. She stated that many citizens stated that they do not want their view blocked by this type of large building. **Councilwoman Marshall** pointed out the fact that none of those citizens attended the meeting to voice their concerns. **Vic Conrad** stated that the building itself would sit down in a hole and would decrease its visible height. He distributed pictures of similar buildings recently constructed in other locations and schematics for the fire suppression system to the mayor and council. When asked for more details, **Derek Couse, representing JR Simplot**, stated that from road elevation to the top of the roofline, the building would be approximately 40ft in height above ground and the elevator would be approximately 30ft above the roofline. Additionally, it would be located near the railroad spur and closer to the highway. **Mayor Vipperman** asked how many jobs it would add to the Wendell area and whether they would be local hires or current employees of the company. **Vic Conrad** stated it would add between 19-30 new jobs to the area, and it would be a mix of both local hires and company employees who transfer to the new location. After discussion, **Councilman Gonzales** made a motion to withdraw the City of Wendell's objection, change its opinion to neutral and asked **Mayor Vipperman** to provide a letter to Gooding County reflecting this decision. **Councilwoman**

McRoberts seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

Consideration of Funding for Veteran's Park

Tabled for more information

State Insurance Fund (Workmans' Comp) Estimate for FY25-26

City Clerk Karri French presented the council with the current estimate from State Insurance Fund (workmans' compensation insurance) for fiscal year 2025-2026. She also provided the rates the city paid in fiscal year 2023-2024 and fiscal year 2024-2025. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman McRoberts** made a motion to accept the State Insurance Fund estimate for fiscal year 2025-2026 in the amount of \$10,506. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

Consideration of J-U-B Annual Reuse System Agreement

Tracy Ahrens, representing J-U-B Engineers, Inc., presented the council with an updated agreement showing a 4% increase over last year's agreement. **Mayor Vipperman** and **Councilman Gonzales** stated that they appreciated that J-U-B had agreed to a decreased rate. **City Attorney Tim Stover** stated that he had reviewed the updated agreement. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman McRoberts** made a motion to accept the J-U-B Annual Reuse System Agreement in the amount of \$12,375. **Councilman Gonzales** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts -Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COUNCIL

Councilwoman McRoberts thanked J-U-B and Tracy Ahrens for the quick turnaround on the annual agreement.

Councilwoman Marshall thanked **Fire Chief Bob Bailey** for his hard work with Public Works and J-U-B. She thanked **City Clerk Karri French** for her hard work with the budget. She stated that the city will be amending the current budget at a public hearing on September 18, 2025 to transfer budgeted funds for the Library Remodel and the Shop Addition projects.

MAYOR

Mayor Vipperman stated that the city held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Library Remodel project earlier today and received a \$5,000 donation from Elaine Ambrose toward the project. She announced that there would be a tour of the new digester at a local dairy on September 9, 2025, from 9 am to 11 am. She stated that she would be meeting with Frontier Community Resources (formerly REDS) to show them the building currently being remodeled to become the new library and to discuss the possibility of grant options for the project. She also thanked **City Clerk Karri French** and **Assistant Fire Chief Crystal Houser** for helping **Deputy Clerk Maria Sanchez** go over nearly every single

utility account in Wendell.

Adjourn

Councilman Gonzales made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Wendell City Council at 7:21 PM. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. Motion passed.


Rebecca Vipperman, Mayor

Attest:


Karri French, City Clerk/Treasurer