

City of Wendell
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2026

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 McRoberts; Councilman Juan Gonzales and Councilman Donald Dunn. City Attorney Tim Stover was also present.

AMENDED AGENDA

None

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Councilwoman McRoberts made a motion to approve the January 29, 2026, special council meeting minutes, as presented. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

Councilwoman McRoberts made a motion to approve the February 5, 2026, regular council meeting minutes, as presented. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. **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 as presented in the amount of \$32,258.61. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

(Public Works/Clerk-Treasurer/Fire/Police/Library/Ordinance)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Vacate Application-Anderson

Mayor Vipperman opened the public hearing at 6:43 PM. She introduced the topic to be discussed and explained the rules of conduct to those present who may want to comment on the topic of this public hearing. **Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis** stated that Ted Anderson has submitted a Vacate application requesting the city vacate the right-of-way on 7th Ave E in Blocks 177 & 178. The applicant proposed to use the vacated property for pasture. He also directed the council to a map provided with their copy of the Vacate application that showed the area.

Ted Anderson was present to give details of his plans to use the area in his Vacate application for pastureland. He stated that he has great neighbors who all support his application. He

stated that he is trying to protect his farm from any multifamily housing potentially being built nearby. He stated that this would also protect farm buildings, some being around one hundred years old, that were built directly on the right-of-way. If approved, he would consolidate his eight existing lots into six lots. He stated that he would not develop the East side of his property using it as pastureland. On the West side he plans to build single family homes and no tiny homes. He stated that a road already provides access to the West side of the property.

Mayor Vipperman asked the council if they had any questions, comments, or anything to discuss. **Councilman Dunn** stated that giving away city property is never a good idea. Once it is gone it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to get back. **Ted Anderson** stated that all his neighbors were in support. Councilman Dunn also asked why there were buildings built in the right-of-way. **Ted Anderson** stated that in the past someone built them and some are probably close to one hundred years old. He also stated that in the past the council had discussed putting a road in the same right-of-way, a neighbor had put the land on the other side up for sale and he bought it to protect his farm. **Councilwoman Marshall** asked where the farm was located on the map in relation to the area on the Vacate application. **Ted Anderson** described its location to the council, and they were able to locate it on the map.

Mayor Vipperman asked if the Clerk's Office had received any responses from the public. **Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis** stated that sixteen certified letters were sent out, thirteen were received, two were undeliverable and two were returned. Both are in support of the application. **Mayor Vipperman** asked if there were any written comments. **Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis** stated there were no comments.

Mayor Vipperman opened the public hearing for public comment.

Opposed:

Don Bunn stated that he is against the city vacating property and the application. It affects the whole town and many times, not favorably. He stated that it only helps the applicants in most cases. He stated that there are many old vacations that were done after the original plat was completed that still haunt the town to this day. He asked the council to consider the whole community over the individual. The future of the city is unknown, and you rarely get the land back and it may be needed for the future of the city. He asked the council to deny the application.

Neutral:

None

In Favor:

None

Rebuttal:

Ted Anderson spoke briefly on farm conservation and how there is no hunting, crops must be planted annually and how having one protects farms and the future. He stated that his goal is to protect his farm by submitting the Vacate application and all his neighbors present at the meeting approved of his application. He asked the council to approve his application.

Mayor Vipperman asked the council if they had any additional questions, comments, or anything to discuss. There was no discussion. **Mayor Vipperman** closed the public hearing at 6:57 PM.

Comprehensive Plan 2026-City of Wendell

Mayor Vipperman opened the public hearing at 6:58 PM. She introduced the topic to be discussed and reminded those present of the rules of conduct for anyone who may want to comment regarding the topic of this public hearing. She stated that the Comprehensive Plan had been updated by herself and **City Clerk Karri French**.

Mayor Vipperman asked the council if they had any questions, comments, or anything to discuss. Councilwoman Marshall stated that there was a typo on page 2. Mayor Vipperman stated that a local business had responded the previous day with an updated number of people the company employs in Wendell. **City Clerk Karri French** stated that she would fix the typo and update the employment information. **Mayor Vipperman** opened the public hearing for public comment.

Opposed:

None

Neutral:

None

In Favor:

None

Rebuttal:

None

Mayor Vipperman asked the council if they had any additional questions, comments, or anything to discuss. There was no discussion. **Mayor Vipperman** closed the public hearing at 7:01 PM.

NEW BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

Consideration of Audit FY-24-25-Scott Hunsaker

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. **Scott Hunsaker, Mahlke Hunsaker & Co**, presented the fiscal year 2024-2025 audit to the council. He stated that there were no issues found, and Mahlke Hunsaker & Co. have given the desired unqualified opinion. He stated that the staff was easy to work with and the audit went smoothly. The checks and balances the city staff and council use, which include a review of the expenses and the minutes by the council,

are especially important when the accounting staff is one person. He also stated that our monetary reserves are still in good shape and the city has been able to start a couple of major projects in the last year. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman Marshall** made a motion to accept the audit as presented. **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 Waiving City's Portion of Building Permit Fees-Rural Fire Department

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. She stated that **Fire Chief Bob Bailey** was unable to attend as planned due to unforeseen circumstances. The Fire Department is looking to add to the existing structure on the E side. The project is still in the planning phase. It may be designed to add an office and another bay. The Fire Department wanted to get ahead of the project by asking the city to waive its portion of any building permit fees on the proposed project. She also stated that the next step would be to ask Gooding County to waive their portion of the building permit fees. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman Marshall** made a motion to waive the city's portion of the building permit fees for the addition to the Fire Station. **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 Waiving City's Portion of Building Permit Fees-New Library Sign

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. She stated that the new Library location would have a new sign placed on the front of the building. She asked the council to waive the city's portion of the building permit fees. She also stated that the next step would be to ask Gooding County to waive their portion of the building permit fees. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman Marshall** made a motion to waive the city's portion of the building permit fees for the new library sign. **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 Vacate Application-Anderson

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. She asked if the council had any additional questions or comments. **Councilman Gonzales** stated that he does not like giving city property away. It is difficult to impossible to get it back once it has been done. The area the applicant is asking to be vacated is a platted road. The city may not choose to put a road in now, but it is unwise to give the land away. The land was surveyed in 2021 and confirmed the plat and that it still stayed in harmony with the original plat and planning. He stated that the proposed vacation would give landowners on both sides half of the land asked for (approximately 40 ft to each) and approving it is an unwise decision. **Councilwoman Marshall** stated that the city never knows what future needs it will have. **Councilwoman McRoberts** asked if there were any city utilities located within the area in the application. **Councilman Gonzales** stated that there are not, but the city may need to run utilities in the future and could do so even with the buildings in the way. When asked, he stated that the council has no intention of moving or touching those buildings at this time. **Councilwoman McRoberts** stated that she was concerned about the city's ability to extend water and sewer lines in the future. If the application were approved the city would be unable to, potentially

affecting future growth. After discussion, **Councilwoman Marshall** made a motion to deny the Vacate application submitted by Ted Anderson on 7th Ave E in Blocks 177 & 178 to prevent negative effects on unknown future growth in Wendell. **Councilman Gonzales** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilwoman McRoberts- Aye, Councilman Gonzales- Aye and Councilman Dunn- Aye**; motion passed.

Consideration of Comprehensive Plan 2026-City of Wendell/ Resolution 218-2026- Comprehensive Plan

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. She asked if the council had any additional questions or comments. There was no discussion. When asked, City Attorney Tim Stover confirmed that the city could pass the Comprehensive Plan and Resolution 218-2026- Comprehensive Plan together. **Councilman Gonzales** made a motion to accept the Comprehensive Plan with corrections and Resolution 218-2026 as presented. **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 Proposed Irrigation Rates 2026

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman McRoberts** made a motion to accept the Proposed Irrigation Rates 2026. **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 Resolution 219-2026-Irrigation

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. This item was tabled for defined verbiage requested by the mayor and councilmembers that will more clearly convey the intention of the document. It will be presented again before the Irrigation Public Hearing on March 5, 2026.

Consideration of Sparklight Annual Renewal-City Hall/Library/Shop

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. **City Clerk Karri French** presented the annual renewals for Sparklight internet at City Hall and Public Works. She stated that the renewal showed no change to the current rate. After a brief discussion, **Councilwoman McRoberts** made a motion to accept the Sparklight annual renewals for City Hall and Public Works 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.

Consideration of Renewing Government Finance Officers Association Membership (GFOA)

Mayor Vipperman introduced the item. **City Clerk Karri French** presented the council with information on GFOA and reasons why she would like the council to approve the renewal. The council asked for more information, including specific classes the clerk would like to take. Tabled.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris McRoberts asked if gaining GFOA certifications would provide the city with any discounts from ICRMP. **City Clerk Karri French** answered that it would not, ICRMP had stopped giving discounts to most agencies a couple of years ago. He thanked the clerk for answering his question.

COUNCIL

Councilwoman McRoberts stated that the mayor is amazing and appreciated for all her hard work. She stated that there are a lot of things that **Mayor Vipperman** does that do not always get noticed.

Councilwoman Marshall stated that she was glad **Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis** had his truck back. **Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis** commented that it was quite the process to fix it, noting that the entire body of the truck being lifted off to access the engine was something to see. He also stated that when Public Works employee **Ethan Howell** (certified mechanic) opened it up, it was obvious that the engine had been repaired before.

Councilman Gonzales stated that he was working in Jerome on an Idaho Housing project in the area and there were cats everywhere. He stated that he was glad we (Wendell) don't have that problem. He expressed his sincere appreciation for Gooding County Sheriff's Office presence at the high school games.

MAYOR

Mayor Vipperman thanked **City Clerk Karri French** for keeping the City on track by scheduling important events such as the annual public hearings, working with the public, and maintaining all required financial duties and reports. She stated that her efforts are greatly appreciated. She also expressed her appreciation to **Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis** for offering to take on additional responsibilities, including much of the behind-the-scenes work involved in processing Planning and Zoning and Code-related applications he already manages, as well as Special Use applications. She stated that she sincerely appreciates him stepping up to assist the Clerk's Office.

Adjourn

Councilman Gonzales made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Wendell City Council at 7:42 PM. **Councilman Dunn** seconded the motion. Motion passed.


Rebecca Vipperman, Mayor

Attest:


Karri French, City Clerk/Treasurer