

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA
June 22, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Ted Herman, Reid Olson, Keith Van Beek, Brian Anderson, City Manager Ian Rigg, , City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lake National Law LLP, and City Clerk Daphney Maras.

ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT: Chief of Police Darren Hanson, and Finance Director Kristi Brutlag

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL - Mayor Murray called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. City Clerk Maras administered roll call.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Mayor Murray asked all in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

CEREMONIAL ITEMS – Police Chief Hanson introduced Joe Johnson, who is one of the newest additions to the police department. City Clerk Maras administered the Oath of Office to Police Officer Joe Johnson

PUBLIC FORUM

John Caucutt questioned how a “No” vote regarding the Song Bird Trail would affect Adams Ave.

Mary Umstead is the owner of the Merry-Go-Round consignment shop on Clark Street. She described her negative experience during the Eddie Cochran festival involving some of the hosts of the festival.

Thomas Newell spoke regarding the Economic Development Director’s absence from the community. He inquired what the hiring process entailed. Mayor Murray assured Mr. Newell that he would personally follow up with a response.

Charles Newell spoke of

CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the May 26, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the May 26, 2026 Work Session
- C. License & Permits

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the consent agenda as read, seconded by Councilor Herman. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

PETITIONS, REQUESTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

- A. The 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, audited by Bergen KDV, was presented by Ryan Engelstad of Bergen KDV using a PowerPoint overview. He responded to councils' questions as presented.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Ordinance 26-157 Amending Zoning and the Landuse Map from Single-Family Residence (R-1) to Industrial District (I-2) for Outlot A of Battleson Renchin Addition (2nd Reading)

Rezoning is requested for Outlot A of the Battleson Renchin Addition from R-1 to I-2 to support a future sale and potential expansion of Vortex Cold Storage. Adjacent Vortex property and the remaining Port Authority No. 3 / ALEDA Jobs Park are already zoned Industrial, so the change is consistent with surrounding uses.

While the 2040 Comprehensive Plan designates this area for residential use, development patterns show the corridor functioning as industrial. Staff recommends amending the Plan following rezoning approval to reflect existing conditions.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 2, 2026, and recommends approval based on findings of rezoning consistency and zoning compatibility.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve. Seconded by Councilor Herman. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Councilors Olson and Van Beek voted Nay. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 26-157
(Included with these minutes)

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Resolution 26-113 Accepting Bid for the 2026 Lead Service Line Replacement Project – Job 2606**

Engineering has reviewed the bids opened on June 2, 2026 for the 2026 Lead Service Line Replacement Project. This project is a City project designed and administered by the City. The project involves replacement of lead service lines throughout the City. This is the third year of lead service replacement projects. The City has secured approximately \$1,000,000 in grant funds for this project. This is less than in previous years. The plans and specifications were written in a way that we can reduce the awarded amount after the award. A change order will be done to reduce the award to match funding.

This project was let as one advertisement for bids with two sub-groups of 75 service line replacements within. Bidders were allowed to bid on any combination of groups 1-2, and the contract was awarded to the low bidder for each group. The Engineer's estimate was \$1,163,877.42. Engineering received 4 bids for group 1 and three bids for group 2. The bid results are as follows:

Contractor	Bid	Bid	TOTAL
	Group 1: 75 services	Group 2: 75 services	
BCM Construction, Inc. Faribault; MN	\$535,455.40	\$537,877.60	\$1,073,333.00
H&M Underground Solutions; Austin, MN	\$627,213.00	\$639,459.40	\$1,266,672.40
Platinum Plumbing; Albert Lea, MN	\$511,465.00	No Bid	\$511,465.00
Wencl Construction; Owatonna, MN	\$637,740.25	\$633,500.90	\$1,271,241.15

This resolution acknowledges the bids were accepted and summarizes the bids. Engineering is recommending the low bid for each of the project groups, Platinum Plumbing in the amount of \$511,465.00 for group 1 and BCM Construction of Faribault MN in the amount of \$537,877.60 for group 2. The total contract will be \$1,049,342.60. The bid abstract is attached.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen to approve. Seconded by Councilor Van Beek. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson. Mayor Murray abstained. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-113
(Included with these minutes)

B. Resolution 26-114 Accepting Bids for a Portion of the Songbird Trail in Cooperation with Freeborn County – Job 2411

Freeborn County Engineering and City of Albert Lea Engineering have reviewed the bids opened by Freeborn County on Tuesday, June 2, 2026 for a portion of the Songbird Trail.

The first portions proposed to be constructed is from Fountain Street to Highway 13, a portion from Sunset Street to County Road 74, and four bridges.

Freeborn County received two eligible bids with the low bidder being Ulland Brothers Inc. of Albert Lea. Engineering and Freeborn County are recommending accepting the low bid and awarding the contract of \$2,196,928.72 to Ulland Brothers of Albert Lea, Minnesota. The Engineer's estimate was \$1,526,876.34. The bid abstract is attached.

Because the bids were significantly higher than the engineering estimate, the plan is to remove the gravel paved portion of the project. This will reduce the contract by approximately \$93,000.

The higher bids increased the City and County costs significantly. The new estimated costs are as follows:

Estimated Project cost (less gravel portion)	\$2,103,929.00
Grants	
Estimated AT Grant	\$620,953.00
Estimated DNR Connections Grant (Local/City)	\$250,000.00
Estimated DNR Regional Trail Grant (County)	\$300,000.00
Estimated City Local Funds	\$466,488.00
Estimated Freeborn County Local Funds	\$466,488.00

The City and County also evaluated awarding only the bridges, which would reduce the total award to \$1,350,370; however, it would also reduce the grants by \$550,000. It would only reduce the City and County costs from \$466,488.00 to \$400,185, therefore resulting in a significant reduction in the project with not a significant reduction in local costs.

After construction, the City total cost for the Songbird Trail will be approximately \$685,000, engineering services and a wetland credit purchase are included with that total. The funding source for the construction will be Fund 401.

Staff recommends approval of the award to Ulland Brothers Inc., less the gravel portion of the trail project.

Motion made by Councilor Anderson to approve. Seconded by Councilor Baker. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Baker, Herman, Olson, Anderson. Mayor Murray, Councilor Christensen, and Councilor Van Beek voted nay. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-114
(Included with these minutes)

C. Public Hearing and Resolution 26-115 Establishing the Economic Development Authority of the City of Albert Lea.

City Manager began by explaining that, first, a public hearing must be conducted, and after the hearing, the Council can vote on the resolution. The resolution is standard for the creation of an EDA. The EDA is a special district that currently encompasses the City of Albert Lea but could be expanded in cooperation with other governmental agencies. The benefit at this time is the differing level of authority an EDA has that is greater than that of an HRA, and can alleviate potential projects or actions of the Port Authority. Following the Council meeting, the EDA will convene no sooner than 8:00 pm.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. He called the first time, and John Caucutt spoke about his opposition to the development of an EDA. Mayor Murray called a second time. Lucas Shuster

spoke in support of the creation of an EDA. Mayor Murray called a third time. No one spoke. Mayor Murray closed the public hearing.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen to approve. Seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-115
(Included with these minutes)

D. Appointment of the Economic Development Authority Board Members: Rich Murray, Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Ted Herman, Reid Olson, Keith Van Beek, and Brian Anderson.

The Council will need to officially appoint itself to the EDA. The Mayor will make the appointment announcement, and it would be best to have the Council move and second to approve.

Members and Terms:

- Ward 4 – Reid Olsen expires 12-31-2026
- Ward 5 – Keith Van Beek expires 12-31-2027
- Ward 6 – Brian Anderson expires 12-31-2028
- Ward 1 – Rachel Christensen expires 12-31-2029
- Ward 2 – Larry Baker expires 12-31-2030
- Ward 3 – Ted Herman expires 12-31-2032
- Mayor – Rich Murray expires 12-31-2032

The appointment of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and more will occur in the first EDA board meeting.

City Attorney Holstad described the benefits of the creation of the EDA.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen to approve the appointment of the EDA Board Members as presented. Seconded by Councilor Herman. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

E. Adoption of Bylaws of the Economic Development Authority of the City of Albert Lea

These bylaws are basic and were provided by our TIF/bonding attorney, who has helped with several questions related to economic development and use of an EDA. The official seal is not attached at this time to the bylaws, but will be approved at a later date by the board and the Council.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to adopt the Bylaws of the EDA as presented. Seconded by Councilor Herman. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

F. Resolution 26-116 Accepting Donations as Presented to the City of Albert Lea

The City of Albert Lea is generally authorized to accept donations pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 465.03 for the benefit of its citizens. Staff recommends acceptance of the following donations as submitted for Council review and approval.

- DAFgiving 360 - Murray Family Charitable Fund – In Honor of Adam Murray
 - \$18,903 - Shoreland Heights Playground Equipment
 - \$5,000 - Senior Center Design

Councilor Christensen expressed her appreciation to the Murray family for their donation and extended her gratitude to all community members contributing to these meaningful causes.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve. Seconded by Councilor Anderson. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-116
(Included with these minutes))

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None.
- Public Announcements – Reported on the rationale for her vote on the recent animal ordinance. Mentioned the upcoming Humane Society fundraiser. Also mentioned the upcoming Blue Zones celebration, including Dan Buettner and Ellen Kehr serving as the Grand Marshals for the 4th of July parade.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – Working on a couple of nuisance complaints
- Committee Update – None

Third Ward, Councilor Herman reported:

- Ward Items – Worked on responding to grass and parking complaints
- Committee Update – Volunteered at the recent Eddie Cochran festival

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – Worked on a couple of ward items.
- Committee Update – None

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcements – Mentioned the Eddie Cochran Festival and Ride for Heroes.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcements – Mentioned some local activities and events he visited

MAYOR REPORT:

Provided an update on the many community events he attended or stopped in to visit.

Mentioned the upcoming events and said they are also listed on the City’s website.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

- Mentioned two modular homes that were recently built on the properties the City sold as part of the redevelopment process.
- The budget process has begun, and all staff budgets are due by June 26th
- Provided an update on the many community events he attended or stopped in to visit.
- He spoke of the importance of creating more housing

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

A. Resolution 26-117 Approving Claims

- (1) Presentation of Claims Over \$25,000

The attached resolution directs the Mayor and City Treasurer to issue the payment of claims as presented in the Detail of Claims report. In addition, Maras displayed a list of claims over \$25,000 for the public’s viewing, transparency, and education.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Van Beek. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Herman, Olson, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-117
(Included with these minutes)

Councilor Christensen motioned for adjournment; Councilor Anderson seconded. That there being no further business, the Council meeting adjourns until the next regular meeting of the Albert Lea City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 13, 2026. On a voice call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed, and the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: PM

Mayor Rich Murray

Daphney Maras
Secretary of the Council