

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA
December 22, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Jason Howland, Reid Olson, Keith Van Beek, Brian Anderson, City Manager Ian Rigg, Public Works Director Steven Jahnke, City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lakes National Law LLP, and Deputy City Clerk Karla Tukua.

ABSENT: City Clerk Daphney Maras

ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT: Sergeant-at-Arms-Police Chief Darren Hanson.

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

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

CEREMONIAL ITEMS - None

PUBLIC FORUM - None

CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the December 08, 2025 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the December 08, 2025 Work Session
- C. Appointment of Allen Hendriks to the Advisory Planning Commission
- D. Resolution Approving State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreements with the City of Albert Lea on Behalf of Its City Attorney and Police Department

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-222
Included with these minutes)

PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. **Ordinance 25-149 to Rezone the Landuse Map from Single-Family Residence (R-1) to Industrial District (I-2) for PID 34.435.0090 (2nd Reading)**

The Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALEDA) has applied to rezone PID 34.435.0090 from Single Family Residence (R-1) to Industrial District (I-2) to support future business development and potential expansion of the ALEDA Jobs Park. The parcel borders existing ALEDA-owned industrial property to the south, ensuring the change does not constitute spot zoning.

Port Authority Plat No. 3, established in 2010 as an extension of the Jobs Park, encompasses roadway and utility infrastructure, as well as regional stormwater facilities. This area has successfully attracted industrial users, including Vortex Cold Storage, Design Ready Controls, and Green Acres Milling. With most of the park now developed, the northern parcel is considered a logical expansion area due to available infrastructure.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on December 2, 2025 and recommends approval of the rezoning request based on the following findings:

- The rezoning is compatible with the surrounding predominantly industrial land uses.
- The proposed use aligns with the zoning standards of the Industrial District.

Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of this final reading.

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

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 25-149
Included with these minutes)

Anderson stated that he will not support this on behalf of the residents living across the street from this area. They have expressed their disappointment, they expected to have other residences built across from them and now it may be a warehouse or factory. He also wanted to make sure the residents in this area won't bear additional expense for future road projects in this area. Rigg answered that there is work already scheduled in this area, but the City's assessment policy will not allow the City to assess more than what is the improved value, using the equivalent of a residential road.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing Related to Modification of TIF District No. 5-28

A1. Resolution 25-223 Approving a Modification to TIF District No. 5-28 and Modified Interfund Loan

The attached resolution expands and modifies Tax Increment Financing District 5-28 which was originally created in 2020 to accommodate Vortex Cold Storage and modified in October of this year to accommodate potential future developments on the remaining parcels of the ALEDA JOBS Park. Staff recommends approval.

Rebecca Kurtz from Ehler's appeared via Zoom to present a slide presentation regarding modification #3 of TIF District 5-28 for Vortex. She noted that this was being modified to add one

parcel and additional right of way for possible expansion. A map with the added parcel and right of way was displayed for council review. Kurtz explained there will be no change to the budget with this modification. Due to TIF law the City has until May 11th, 2026 to add additional parcels or create new obligations. Kurtz remained available for any questions from council and residents during the public hearing.

Rigg asked Kurtz to verify that the City could remove certain parcels from this district if the development does not happen by the deadline. Kurtz agreed with Rigg, explaining that if agreements or goals are not met by the May 26th deadline, the City would have the opportunity to remove this parcel from this district and create a new TIF district.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing and invited comments regarding the modification of TID District No. 5-28. He called for public comment three times. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-223
Included with these minutes)

B. Resolution 25-224 Approving 10-Year Taser Subscription Agreement

The Police Department's current TASER devices have reached the end of their service life and are no longer supported by the manufacturer. The proposed 10-year subscription model provides predictable long-term costs and includes equipment, training, warranties, software, and ongoing support necessary throughout the life of the agreement. The program also includes replacement of all TASER devices at the midpoint of the contract, ensuring the department maintains current, supported technology without the need for additional future capital purchases. This approach supports fiscal planning while aligning with public safety objectives and industry best practices.

The proposed Axon Taser 10 provides a modern less-lethal option that improves officer capability and increases the likelihood of resolving dangerous situations without escalating to higher levels of force. The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) recognizes conducted energy devices, such as TASERs, as a best practice for law enforcement when used in accordance with policy and training, noting their role in reducing the risk of injury and potential liability to both officers and members of the public. Newer TASER technology has demonstrated improved reliability and effectiveness compared to earlier generations, supporting safer outcomes.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-224
Included with these minutes)

C. **Resolution 25-225 of Sponsorship for the Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for the Songbird Trail – Job 2411**

The City of Albert Lea is applying for funding through the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program from the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the Songbird Trail. The City of Albert Lea will be the lead agency of the trail for the portion from Madison Avenue to Fountain Street.

This grant can cover up to 80% of the eligible costs of the project. The project is estimated at approximately \$900,000. The local match would be 20% of this. The TA program has \$2.1 million available for projects such as this. The funding is for 2030 but could be advanced if received.

This resolution declares the City of Albert Lea the Sponsoring Agency for the grant application and reimbursement, and acknowledges that the City will be responsible for finding additional funding for the local match amount. Approval is recommended by staff.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-225
Included with these minutes)

D. **Resolution 25-226 Agreeing to Maintain the Songbird Trail from Madison Avenue to Fountain Street – Job 2411**

The City of Albert Lea is applying for funding through the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program from the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the Songbird Trail. This resolution declares that the City of Albert Lea will operate and maintain this section of the trail for its useful life. Approval is necessary for the grant and recommended by staff.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-226
Included with these minutes)

Councilor Christensen explained to the public that the City and County have worked hard to secure grants to help support the Songbird Trail and it's the intention of the City to not use levy funds for trail development. She asked City Manager Rigg to verify this, to which he said yes, the intention is to use funding that is reimbursed or directly funded through the sales tax referendum as opposed to using levy money.

E. Resolution 25-227 Accepting Donations from Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library raise non-profit funds for programs and equipment not covered by the general library budget. The Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library raise the funds through the Fountain Lake Bookstore, two book sales throughout the year, membership fees, and general donations. From September to December 2025, the Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library donated a total of \$1,790.53 to the Albert Lea Public Library. The funds were used for the programs listed on the included sheet. In total, the Friends of the Library donated \$7,896.64 during 2025. Many of the library's programs would not be possible without the generous donations from the Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library. Staff recommends approval.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-227
Included with these minutes)

F. Resolution 25-228 Rescinding Resolution 25-213 Approving Residential Tax Abatement to Correct Address and Parcel Number

Resolution 25-213 was approved on December 8, 2025, authorizing a housing tax abatement for the construction of a single-family home in Albert Lea. Following a lot combination, the property's address and parcel number changed, but the resolution did not reflect those updates. To correct this error, staff recommends rescinding Resolution 25-213 and adopting a revised resolution with the accurate information.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-228
Included with these minutes)

G. Resolution 25-229 Amending Purchase and Supplemental Agreements with Albert Lea Housing LP

When the original purchase and supplemental agreement were approved a few assumptions were in place. First, the loan with MHFA would close in 2025 thus closing the sale of the property before December 31st, 2025. The loan closing has been extended to March 2026 roughly. The second is costs related to regulatory requirements were not as high as they have become.

The agreement changes in the resolution and attached documents changes two things. The agreements are extended to December 2026 and we provide our 2023 and 2024 Statewide

Affordable Housing Assistance funding that has to go to 80% AMI rental and is preferred to go towards 50% or less AMI. This project is intended to be 50% AMI or less meeting state requirements. <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/statewide-affordable-housing-aid>

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-229
Included with these minutes)

Anderson asked Rigg to explain what he said in the work session regarding the city's responsibility will decrease. Rigg said the City will be using grant funds the state has given us to go towards these types of projects. The City will be able to apply TIF to the environmental clean-up, which will reduce the City's obligation to increment financing. These funds will be used to assist the developers in moving forward.

H. **Resolution 25-230 Approving the Acquisition of Permanent Easement on Port Authority Plat No. 3 – 2025 Misc. 293**

The City currently has a sanitary sewer lift station and utilities located on property owned by the Albert Lea Port Authority, Port Authority Plat No. 3. This property is getting replated. The 75 foot by 75 foot permanent easement gives the City permanent rights to use this property. The easement is being provided by the Albert Lea Port Authority. Staff recommends approval.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-230
Included with these minutes)

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – Thanked Staff for their help working with her on assisting a resident with our HomeServe program.
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcements – Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holiday season

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – HRA meeting Tuesday and will report at the next council meeting
- Public Announcements – None

Third Ward, Councilor Howland reported:

- Ward Items – One ward item and thanked City Manager Rigg, Wayne Sorenson and Police Chief Hanson on responding quickly on a nuisance item in his ward.
- Committee Update – Annual CVB meeting last week. Park and Rec board meeting last week where the Songbird trail update was presented.
- Public Announcements – None

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Airport Advisory Board and main discussion item was the new garage door to be installed on one of the hangers. He noted there was state funding the city had received for this project.
- Public Announcements – He was glad there was discussion regarding possibly adding additional cannabis businesses. He's looking forward to push this along in our next meetings.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcements – Wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – HRA meeting on Tuesday
- Public Announcements – Wished everyone a Merry Christmas

MAYOR REPORT

Attended the following meetings:

- District 241 Facilities Commission meeting
- ALEDA meetings on projects
- Christmas Bazaar last week, very busy downtown
- Meeting with Near North Housing
- Bridge Church Christmas pageant put on by SPIRE, (Special People in Religion Education).
- Stars Mentoring Annual Banquet, meeting the mentors. He also noted Watsana, the Director of STARS had won an award recently for the work she does.
- Attended Bob Furland's good-bye celebration, thanking him for his service to the City.
- Was at the Karen New Year's celebration at the High School. Included food, dancing and singing to highlight the Karen culture.
- Attended sporting events, basketball, hockey and concerts.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and said it's been a joy working for this community.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

- Attended the Karen New Year festival. It was a great event and to see the community come out for this event.

- Meeting with County staff on potential property agreement.
- In the New Year there will be some changes to boost efficiencies, with new software programs.
- Will get information to Councilor Van Beek that he's requested.
- Arena floor has been recently poured and looking forward to getting that open.
- Attended Bob Furland's good-bye celebration and wished him the best.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

A. Resolution 25-231 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, Tukua 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 Anderson. On voice call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Christensen, Baker, Howland, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 25-231
Included with these minutes)

Councilor Howland motioned for adjournment; Councilor Anderson seconded. That there being no further business, the Council meeting adjourn until the next regular meeting of the Albert Lea City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 12, 2026. On voice call vote, all councilors voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:40 P. M.

Mayor Rich Murray

Karla Tukua
Secretary Pro Tem