

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA
August 24, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Ted Herman, Reid Olson, 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: Councilor Keith Van Beek, Police Chief Darren Hanson, and City Clerk Daphney Maras

ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT: Deputy Chief of Police Darin Palmer and Community Development Director Megan Boeck

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

A. Lifesaving Award presented to Christina Sue Baas, by Deputy Chief Darin Palmer

Deputy Chief Darin Palmer proudly presented Christina Sue Baas with the citizen lifesaving award for her heroic actions on saving the life of a child who was choking.

PUBLIC FORUM - None

CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the August 10, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the August 10, 2026 Work Session
- C. License & Permits

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

PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Glenville Legion Riders to Talk About the Nation of Patriots Homecoming – Scott Kallberg and Larry Larson

Scott Kallberg and Larry Larson spoke about the Nation of Patriots Homecoming event that will

be Saturday September 19, 2026. Riders will stage at Bomgaars around noon, once all riders have arrived, they will travel through Albert Lea to Bergdale Harley Davidson. The Nation of Patriots flag has been to all 50 states including Alaska and Hawaii. Kallberg with the Glenville American Legion said the flag will be housed at the Glenville American Legion until their event again next year. Larson explained that the tour is a big fundraiser for Veterans and through the kick-off event that was held earlier this spring, they were able to raise \$15,000 for Veterans on the first leg of the journey. Adding that the kick-off event has been held in larger cities, but the Albert Lea event was second or third in overall money raised on the first leg of the ride. They thanked the residents of Freeborn County for their generosity and noted that all the money raised here stays in Southern Minnesota to help area Veterans.

Mayor Murray thanked everyone that has been involved with this event and all their hard work.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Ordinance 26-158 Amending Zoning and Land Use Map From Limited Industrial (I-1) to Single-Family Residence (R-1) (2nd Reading)

Rigg stated that City staff proposes rezoning several properties along Plainview Lane and Lincoln Ave. from I-1 to R-1 to remove their legal non-conforming status. Under Minnesota Statutes 462.357, legal non-conforming properties may continue as-is but cannot be expanded or altered, limiting improvements and sometimes affecting property sales.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as Medium Density Residential, though surrounding land within the 100-year flood zone limits future development.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on August 4, 2026 and recommends approval based on findings of rezoning consistency with the largely residential area and zoning compatibility with the R-1 District. Planning Commission recommends approval of this final reading

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

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 26-158
Included with these Minutes)

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing Regarding the Disposal of 338 S. Broadway Ave.

Rigg explained to the public that 338 S. Broadway Ave. is the old theatre building that had been torn down. He said there is no intended future public use of the property and redevelopment for private ownership is the highest and best use. Item 8E shows a potential use of the property

consistent with the City's requests for proposed development of the area.

Mayor Murray opened the public hearing. He asked three times if anyone would like to speak. No one spoke. He closed the public hearing.

A1. Resolution 26-143 Declaring No Public Interest in 338 S. Broadway Ave.

Rigg stated there is no intended future public use of the property and redevelopment for private ownership is the highest and best use. Item 8E shows a potential use of the property consistent with the City's requests for proposed redevelopment.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-143
Included with these Minutes)

B. Resolution 26-144 Accepting Donations as Presented to the City of Albert Lea

Rigg said 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 is a volunteer run organization that raises funds through the Fountain Lake Bookstore, two book sales throughout the year, membership fees, and general donations. The Friends of the Library donated \$6,276.31 for programs and activities that took place in June, July and August. This brings the yearly total of donations to \$7,719.39. The funds were used for the programs and activities listed on the included sheet. Without the generous donations from the Friends of the Albert Lea Public Library, many of the library's programs and activities would not be possible.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-144
Included with these Minutes)

C. Resolution 26-145 Regarding the Support of a Minnesota Forward Fund Application in Connection with JonnyPops LLC

Rigg explained the company is considering locations for expansion of operations which would include construction of a new facility, implementing new production lines and material, and full-time job creation for the region. Cost of construction, equipment and associated financing costs

require financial assistance to make the project financially feasible, thus the Forward Fund incentive is being pursued.

Should we approve, we'll move into final planning stages in Q4 2026 / Q1 2027 with an anticipated final decision and commencement of construction to take place in the summer of 2027. Staff recommends approval.

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, Olson, Anderson and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-145
Included with these Minutes)

Councilor Christensen thanked the Mayor, City Staff and ALEDA for the work they have done to get the JonnyPops resolution this far. Councilor Baker concurred with Christensen and added his thanks.

D. Resolution 26-146 Approving Preliminary and Final Plat of Dress Second Addition

Rigg stated the Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 5, 2026 to review the Plat of Dress Second Addition for compliance with Chapter 38 Subdivisions.

The purpose of the plat is to subdivide a smaller 16-acre parcel to provide for a potential residential development. The preliminary plat of Dress Second Addition provides a conceptual layout of potential lots, blocks, storm water areas as well as street connections for Westwood and Seath Drive.

The preliminary and final plat meets all the requirements of Chapter 38—Subdivisions. In addition, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as low density residential which is described as newer single-family residential neighborhoods.

The previous easement issue has been resolved and is accurately reflected on the attached plat.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-146
Included with these Minutes)

E. Resolution 26-147 Approving Purchase Agreement with Astra Commons

The Purchase agreement is for \$400,000 with \$5,000 deposited, \$95,000 at close and \$300,000 as a write down to be reimbursed by TIF. The goal is a mixed-use building and to restore the three existing buildings while building new adjoining the other buildings. The term is for 180 days.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-147
Included with these Minutes)

Councilor Baker said he'd like Astra Commons to keep in mind that this is in the Historical District when they design what the building will look like. Rigg said if that's not spelled out in the purchase agreement, it will be in the development agreement about the historical nature of the property.

Mayor Murray clarified that this is part of the 300 Block on Broadway. Rigg added that yes, this was missed in his summary. Stating that this is the 300 Block and the City owns 5 of the 6 parcels. This agreement is for 5 of the 6 parcels, explaining the developer will need to work with the owner of the 6th parcel for that purchase agreement.

F. Resolution 26-148 Approving Purchase Agreement for 809 Clark Street West

Rigg said the purchase price is \$0 however there are financial obligations on the purchaser. If they do not adjoin the property the city may complete this task and assess, the property may come back to the City to be sold or they pay \$4,000 that will be assessed for the price of the land without contingency. This lot is non-conforming and is to be adjoined to another non-conforming lot to make a single lot that is conforming and capable for redevelopment.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-148
Included with these Minutes)

Councilor Christensen asked City Manager Rigg to explain what non-conforming means. He stated that residential lots need to be a certain square footage and certain dimension to put a house on it. This lot and the neighboring lot if combined, look like an original lot. They may be 60' wide, but are only 60' deep and it should have been about 60'x124'. It looks like at one time this lot was separated. By adjoining these lots it will make it one conforming lot and it can be redeveloped.

Councilor Baker brought up another resident that also lives next to this lot and is interested in

this property. He wanted to ensure if this doesn't go forward or doesn't work out, this other resident would have an opportunity to purchase. Rigg stated that if something happened and this didn't go through the property would be put up for RFP again.

G. Resolution 26-149 Approving Purchase Agreement for 825 1st Avenue South

Rigg explained the purchase price is \$0 however there are financial obligations on the purchaser. If they do not adjoin the property the city may complete this task and assess, the property may come back to the City to be sold or they pay \$4,000 that will be assessed for the price of the land without contingency. This lot is non-conforming and is to be adjoined to a conforming lot to make a larger single lot that is capable of redevelopment.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-149
Included with these Minutes)

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – No ward items.
- Committee Update – Senior Center will have their 2nd meeting of the month, Wednesday August 26th. They are working to address the issues related to their move to a new location and fundraising for this.
- Planning commission meets a week from tomorrow, September, 1st.
- Met with the Eddie Cochran Statue group and met the artist who is the same artist that did the Marion Ross statue. She explained the group has already raised \$30,000 and fund raising is on-going.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – One Ward item he's given to the City Manager.
- Committee Update – HRA meeting is tomorrow, August 25th. He stated the HRA will break ground on a new home construction project on Wednesday, August 26th, giving details of the home. He thanked everyone that has been a part of this project.

Third Ward, Councilor Herman reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Park and Rec Advisory Board meeting was cancelled, but will be attending the CVB board meeting tomorrow, August 25th.
- Public Announcement – He attended the Stand Down on August 15th at the Armory in Albert Lea. He explained the Stand Down is an organization that helps veterans and their families.

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – Has an item he'll send to City staff
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcement - He noted school has started and so has fall sports. He asked everyone to get out and enjoy a game.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported: ABSENT

- Ward items -
- Committee Update -

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – One Ward item he's working on.
- Committee Update – Budget meeting Thursday and HRA meeting tomorrow.

MAYOR REPORT

- Attended 3 ALEDA update meetings over the past 2 weeks.
- Attended the Power on Midwest meeting at Wedgewood Cove.
- Attended a canvassing board, explaining that each time there's an election there will be a canvassing board meeting to audit results.
- Provided an update on the many community events he attended.
- He mentioned the Stand Down at the Armory and said there were a lot of different groups that come in to provide services to our veterans. This is very important and we want to keep doing this to take care of our veterans.

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

CITY MANAGER REPORT

- Met with Braun Engineering to cover the Blazing Star projects which includes, Kwik Trip and the Housing Project, as well as looking at the implementation of the economic development grant to clean up the site. Stating we should start seeing some of the agreements coming through on these projects.
- He's working with staff on the 2027 budget and will be meeting on September 10th to cover this further and to work on the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Union Negotiations have started.
- Meeting later this week with the Port Authority, Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Economic Development Authority, to go over a group of projects and assign responsibility.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

A. Resolution 26-150 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 Christensen to approve. Seconded by Councilor Herman. On voice 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 26-150
Included with these Minutes)

Councilor Christensen motioned for adjournment; Councilor Herman seconded. That there be 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, September 14, 2026. On a voice vote, all councilors present voted in favor of said motion.

Mayor Murray declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:44 P.M.

Mayor Rich Murray

Karla Tukua
Secretary Pro Tem