

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA
May 26, 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, Civil Engineer Chris Lowe, City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lakes National Law LLP, and City Clerk Daphney Maras.

ABSENT: Public Works Director Steve Jahnke

ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT: Chief of Police Darren Hanson, Lieutenant, City Planner Megan Boeck

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

A. Mayor Murray read aloud the Proclamation Declaring June 4, 2026 as Day-Breakers Kiwanis Day.

PUBLIC FORUM

Dave Karge spoke of his opposition to lifting the dog/cat limit.

CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the May 11, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the May 11, 2026 Work Session
- C. License & Permits
- D. Resolution Approving Purchase of Parks Department Bucket Truck Chassis

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the consent agenda with the amendment to include adding the Moose Lodge to serve alcohol at Hayek Field for the adult baseball summer season 2026, 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 26-090
(Included with these minutes))

PETITIONS, REQUESTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 26-091 Accepting Bid and Awarding Contract for the Front Street Bridge No. 24514 Rehabilitation Project (Job 2605)

Engineering and Erickson Engineering has reviewed the bids opened Tuesday, May 19, 2026 for the Front Street Bridge No. 24514 Rehabilitation project.

The project involves pier repairs to the Front Street bridge. The work involved is not typical work which is reflected in the number of bids received, only one, and the amount of the bid. Finding a comparable project was also difficult which is also reflected in the engineers estimate.

Engineering is recommending accepting the low bid and awarding the contract for \$381,339.60 to PCIRoads LLC of Maple Grove, Minnesota. The Engineer's estimate was \$328,230.00. The bid abstract is attached. The City will be using its state aid funds on this project.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-091
(Included with these minutes)

B. Resolution 26-092 Accepting Bid and Awarding Contract for the WWTP Fiberglass Aeration Tank Covers & Ventilation Stacks Rehabilitation (Job 2620)

Engineering has reviewed the bids opened Tuesday, May 19, 2026 for the WWTP Aeration Tank Covers & Ventilation Stacks Rehabilitation project.

The project involves sandblasting and recoating the fiberglass aeration tank covers and ventilation stacks at the WWTP.

Engineering received four bids. Engineering is recommending accepting the low bid and awarding the contract for \$241,560.00 to Champion Coatings Inc. of Jordan, Minnesota. The Engineer's estimate was \$257,620.00.

Motion made by Councilor Herman 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 26-092
(Included with these minutes)

C. Resolution 26-093 Authorizing Memorandum of Agreement for the Planning, Construction and Maintenance of Songbird Trail (City of Albert Lea - Freeborn County

- Waseca County)

This resolution authorizes the City Manager to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Freeborn County and Waseca County. The MOA is the agreement on how the Songbird Trail will be planned, constructed and maintained. The MOA is required in order to obtain regional trail designation.

In 2014 the City and County entered into a Joint Powers Agreement regarding the trail. This Memorandum of Agreement replaces the existing agreement.

On May 11, 2026 Freeborn County Engineer, Phil Wacholz presented at the pre-agenda meeting regarding the agreement.

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, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-093
(Included with these minutes)

D. Resolution 26-094 Denying Final Plat of Dress Second Addition

City Planner Boeck said 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 meets all the requirements of Chapter 38—Subdivisions. However, there are additional utility easements not shown within or along the abandoned Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul Railroad. As such, the Planning Commission recommended approval contingent upon the applicant providing evidence or title status including encumbrances and easements.

Since this item was tabled at the previous council meeting, it has been determined that the easement descriptions provided do not describe the property that the existing transmission lines are situated upon and therefore, the final plat does not conform to evidence of title.

In order to meet the MN 60-day rule which requires local government agencies to approve or deny land-use and zoning requests within 60-days, staff recommends denial until easement discrepancies or conflicts can be resolved.

Denying the plat does not mean staff does not support the future development of Dress Second Addition, rather it's due diligence to ensure that there are accurate descriptions of land and property boundaries, compliance with local zoning laws, and clear legal descriptions describing all easements.

Staff recommends denial of the final plat of Dress Second Addition based on the above findings.

City Planner Boeck and City Attorney Holstad responded to council's questions.

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

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-094
(Included with these minutes)

E. Ordinance 26-156 Amending Chapter 8 – Article II. – Animal Control (1st Reading)

This ordinance was first presented at the May 11 council meeting and was tabled to allow time for additional information from the Police Department regarding pet-related complaints, as well as to gather further public input. Since that initial introduction, the term “commercially” has been added to the definition of *Kennels* in Section 8.043, and the redundant kennel definition previously located in Section 8.029 has been removed. All other proposed changes from the first introduction remain unchanged.

Key considerations in this proposal that have stirred public opinion or comments are:

- The removal of animal limits is countered by the additional authority to correct excessive animal ownership if a nuisance or risk is created. Since January 1st, 2023, there have been over 3,000 animal complaints and only one citation for violation of the animal limit. That citation is one of several citations to the owner, without which the animal limit citation would never have been issued.
- Animals running at large. Originally focused on dogs, the ordinance now adds cats. As before, an owner is not allowed to let their animal run at large. This does not necessarily mean a leash when the animal is outside. It means once off the owner's property, a cat or dog has to be under their physical control. A leash is an example in the definition of control and not running “at large”.
- Prohibition of feeding stations does not mean people cannot help with the stray or feral population. It means these efforts are to be done in coordination or part of some larger animal management effort, which includes trap, fix, and rehome/release to eventually reduce the overpopulation, not counter such programs with colonies that are breeding grounds. The Humane Society has vaccinated and fixed 944 cats since 2024, and Camp Companion has trapped and fixed 409 cats.

Councilor Christensen opposes limiting the number of dogs and cats. She noted several reasons.

Motion made by Councilor Herman to amend the proposed ordinance to keep the limit to two dogs and two cats, and approve all the other amendments included in this proposed ordinance. Councilor Olson seconded. Councilor Herman motioned to rescind his first motion. His new motion is to allow any combination of dogs or cats not to exceed a total of four, Councilor Olson does not

support that amendment. Councilor Anderson seconded Herman's motion. On roll call vote, the following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Baker, Herman, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. And the following voted nay: Councilors Christensen, Olson, and Van Beek. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Ordinance 26-156
(Included with these minutes)

F. Resolution 26-095 Authorizing Application, Acceptance, and Entering into a Grant Agreement with The State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety for the FY 2027 DWI/Traffic Safety Officer.

This position is 119% of the salary of a patrol officer. This position is focused on traffic safety. Within the department, if the position is not funded with grants in the future, the position would be removed through attrition. Given the size of the department and the rates of retirement or resignation, this would not create a long-term fiscal constraint.

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, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion passed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution 26-095
(Included with these minutes)

G. Discussion on Establishing an Economic Development Authority

City Manager Rigg displayed a PowerPoint. This is a discussion on whether to notice the formation of an Economic Development Authority on June 22, 2026. In the creation of the authority, the city is not obligated at that time to pass a levy amount, commit staff, or finalize structure or joint efforts. It is only creating the authority to act on certain economic development matters not authorized to the Port Authority or the Housing and Redevelopment Authority. All three have clear expectations under statute, even if there are overlaps, and the City can assign such responsibilities and authority to those other agencies. Council agreed to proceed with the public hearing on June 22nd, 2026 and provide public notice.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None
- Public Announcements – reminded community members to be a good neighbor.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Will be attending an HRA meeting tomorrow
- Public Announcements – None

Third Ward, Councilor Herman reported:

- Ward Items – Responded to a couple of citizen complaints
- Committee Update – Attended the Park & Rec meeting and received a tour of the new North Lot restrooms, updated on the City Pool painting, and discussed the possibility of adding a porta-potty at Frank Hall Park, and also discussed adding an Eddie Cochran statue at a local park.
- Public Announcements – Participated in the Nation of Patriots celebration

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended an Airport Advisory meeting. Noted the glider competition that took place at the airport last weekend.
- Public Announcements – Mentioned the new baseball team in Albert Lea called the Albert Lea Express, and encouraged everyone to stop out and watch a game. Watched the Nation of Patriots ride by.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Library Board meeting, reported growth in the programs.
- Public Announcements – Attended and participated in the Nations of Patriots event. Volunteered as a blackjack dealer at the High School after the graduation party. Mentioned upcoming events.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Will be attending an HRA meeting tomorrow
- Public Announcements – Attended the event at Graceland Cemetery on Memorial Day.

MAYOR REPORT:

Reported the following and provided details of each:

- Met with the Eddie Cochran committee regarding the possibility of an Eddie Cochran statue to be placed downtown or at Frank Hall Park
- Oat Mill documentary organizers
- Was at Kate Radio to discuss raising funds for the Fireworks
- Welcomed the new owners of Martin's Bicycle Shop
- Witnessed the Oath of the new 3rd Judicial District Judge
- Attended the Legion Riders event
- Attended Albert Lea High School concert choir
- Attended the EDA meeting
- Attended a meeting regarding new housing
- Attended the Adult Education graduation as well as the High School graduation
- Attended the event at Graceland Cemetery on Memorial Day

- Congratulated the High School Boys track team for making it to State

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

CITY MANAGER REPORT

- He will be attending the first Wind Down Wednesday with the Human Rights Commission
- Made several calls to legislators regarding the local sales tax
- Review of the budget
- Toured with a housing developer
- Strategic Plan meeting
- City Clerk's office will be open until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 2nd, to accept affidavit of candidacy
- Will be meeting with the County regarding shared services
- Reminder: school is out for the summer, watch for kids

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

A. Resolution 26-096 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 Anderson to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Baker. 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 26-096
(Included with these minutes)

Councilor motioned Christensen for adjournment; Councilor seconded Van Beek. 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, June 8, 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: 8:38 PM

Mayor Rich Murray

Daphney Maras
Secretary of the Council