

Regular Meeting Minutes of the Fountain City Common Council
Wednesday, July 8, 2026, at 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Ben Adank. Roll call: Stephen Qualy, Peter Schaffner, Barb Schmidtknecht, Scott Feraro, Christine Williamson, and Mike Adank. All present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Citizens Present: Bob Abts, Heidi Stanton, Claire Waters.

Report from Public Works:

Completed routine equipment maintenance.

Watering at the Cemetery.

Repaired water main shutoff valve.

Completed monthly water meter readings, cross-connection work, and meter changeouts.

Addressed runoff and erosion issues along Hill Street with temporary repairs at several curb locations while evaluating a long-term solution.

Integrated Henderson's into the maintenance rotation, with positive feedback from staff and favorable comments on the quality of work

Public Works & Utilities

The committee is actively addressing multiple infrastructure concerns, including drainage issues on Justin Road and Hill Street retaining wall, and general road repairs across the city.

Rather than conducting a new study on future well needs, the committee will review existing engineering reports once records are organized. Relevant files are in the basement and will be able to locate them once renovation is over and the library materials are cleaned out of the storage room.

Contractor availability continues to delay drainage work. TJ's has been asked to assess the Main Street issue and will also complete lift station warranty work during the same visit to reduce disruptions.

A homeowner-funded sewer and water installation on Liberty Street is scheduled for July 13–15, with temporary road closures expected, including impacts at Main and Liberty. The project is being completed ahead of planned resurfacing and will be restored by the same contractor.

Finance & Administration

The annual audit is nearing completion, and the committee continues to gather information on the city park bandshell project. Members are reviewing draft Standards of

Excellence and Behavioral Mitigation policies alongside the Council Handbook for potential updates.

Six-month budget reports show the sewer fund over budget due to the disinfection system and Eagle and Main Street emergency repairs, while the cemetery fund remains under budget as seasonal expenses are still pending. Other overages include attorney fees, police services, additional mowing, and the boat landing survey; however, these are expected to be offset by savings in wages, insurance, and potentially the library budget by year-end.

A referendum notice was included with utility bills, there is work being done on a remote meeting attendance policy for council members. It was also clarified that the police budget appears over budget due to an unbudgeted contract, which will be included next year, with the overall budget still on track.

Economic Development

The committee continues advancing community improvement efforts, including the placement of a donated fountain that is being stored at old firehouse and planning for future fountain locations in partnership with the UW EauClaire. The first proposed permanent location remains behind City Hall, aligning with the donor's wishes.

Public space initiatives are moving forward with priority projects such as evaluating the Pig Island Overlook structure and developing wayfinding signage and an information kiosk to promote local attractions. Volunteer support will help reduce project costs.

Recent improvements include the installation of removable shade structures at the ball field dugouts, significantly improving conditions for users.

Planning is also underway for a Halloween masquerade to celebrate the auditorium's grand reopening, featuring a full day of family-friendly activities and an evening dance.

Promotional materials and potential postcard mailings are being considered to maximize community participation.

Overall, the committee remains focused on beautification, enhancing public spaces, and organizing a major fall community event.

Planning, Zoning and Community Development

The committee has begun updating the city's zoning map, a process that will include public notice, public comment, and a public hearing prior to adoption.

A key proposal under consideration is to rezone most industrial properties to commercial, reflecting the current lack of industrial development while allowing flexibility to revert in the future if needed. The zoning ordinance will also be updated to align with any changes.

There is a special common council meeting on August 10 with the city attorney to review zoning matters and determine next steps. This meeting would involve the full council and legal counsel, it will be held separately from the regular meeting, and include closed session discussion as appropriate.

Flexible Facilities Program

The renovation project is progressing well and remains on schedule, with most doors, hardware, and exit signs installed and operational.

Remaining work includes trim installation, stair tread caps, a new exterior entry light, and other punch list items. Once construction is substantially complete, a final walkthrough list will be conducted. A council member asked if there is a plan to write an article with pictures to show a timeline and updates for the public to see.

Moisture infiltration inside the building is still being monitored, and the contractor plans to investigate and address the issue when weather allows.

Overall, the committee is satisfied with the project's progress and quality. Additional discussion included promoting the project through local media and coordinating future events, with a recommendation to delay the Fire Department's annual dance until next year to highlight the grand opening.

Mayor's Report

Staff is evaluating proposals for an electronic water meter reading system. Preliminary pricing has been received, and the goal is to present options to the appropriate committee before bringing a recommendation to the council next month.

A City Fire Association meeting is scheduled for the end of the month.

Staff has begun exploring a Public Works information management system to improve preventative maintenance, work order tracking, and overall workflow organization. The project is in its early research and evaluation stages.

Approval of Council Minutes

The council returned to the previously skipped agenda item to approve the June 10, 2026, Common Council meeting minutes.

A correction was identified: the minutes should specify that the council approved the overage amount of \$3,313, rather than implying approval of the entire duet furnishing quote.

Council members also discussed the importance of including specific dollar amounts in motions for clearer documentation and future reference.

Motion P. Schaffner, second B. Schmidtknecht to approve the minutes with the amendment of the change to the wording of overage of \$3,313 rather than the entire duet furnishings quote. Motion carried 6-0.

Library Board

The council considered and moved to appoint Sarah Puetz as the fifth member of the Library Board, representing Cochrane – Fountain City School. Her appointment required separate approval, and with it, the board now meets the minimum membership requirement, with the option to add up to two more members in the future.

The Library Board's first meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 13, and will be open to the public.

Motion S. Qualy, second S. Feraro to approve Sarah Puetz as the fifth member of the Library Board representing Cochrane Fountain City School District. Motion carried 6-0.

P. Schaffner, second B. Schmidtknecht to approve closed session minutes from June 10, 2026. Motion carried 6-0.

Employee Handbook Update: Vacation Benefit

The council reviewed an amendment to clarify the vacation accrual schedule after identifying a gap for employees with two to five years of service.

The Finance and Administration Committee recommended providing 80 hours of annual vacation for employees in this range, with all other provisions remaining unchanged.

The update was presented as a clarification to the handbook, and a motion was made to approve the revision.

Motion B. Schmidtknecht, second S. Qualy to approve the vacation as presented for the employee handbook. Motion carried 6-0.

Consideration of City Newsletter

The Finance and Administration Committee proposed creating a monthly city newsletter to enhance communication and transparency with residents. The newsletter would include updates on council activities, city projects, and general community information, serving as a more accessible complement to official meeting minutes.

Proposed features include a monthly council message, a community recognition spotlight, guest contributions from local partners, and the ability to expand content as needed. Residents may also nominate individuals for recognition.

Scott will compile and produce the newsletter, with drafts reviewed by council leadership prior to publication. The newsletter will replace the current auditorium project update.

“The Fountain Bubbler” was discussed as a potential name. While no formal action was taken, there was general consensus to move forward, with the first issue anticipated in August.

Resolution 2026-07 Authorizing the Deputy Clerk to Administer and Conduct Elections for the City of Fountain City

The council considered Resolution 2026-07 to authorize the Deputy Clerk to administer and conduct elections. The resolution designates the Deputy Clerk as the official responsible for overseeing elections throughout the remainder of 2026.

This temporary authorization provides flexibility while the city evaluates its long-term staffing structure, with the expectation that the matter may be revisited in 2027.

The resolution was prepared by staff, reviewed by the city attorney.

Motion P. Schaffner, second S. Qualy to accept resolution 2026-07, authorizing the Deputy Clerk to administer and conduct elections for the City of Fountain City. Motion carried 6-0.

Renewal of the building Permit for the Auditorium Renovation

The council considered renewing the building permit for the auditorium renovation after approximately one year since its original issuance. While not strictly required, staff recommended renewal to maintain clear documentation for the Flexible Facilities Program (FFP) grant.

Renewing the permit provides confirmation that the project remains active and compliant with grant requirements and does not involve any additional cost.

Motion S. Feraro, second M. Adank to renew the building permit for the Auditorium Renovation. Motion carried 6-0.

Fountain City to Sponsor Fountain City Days August 15, 2026

The council considered a request from the Economic Development Committee for the City to sponsor a Main Street dance as part of Fountain City Days on August 15, 2026. The event would complement existing activities, including the Lions Club festival and chicken dinner, Golf Tournament at the Grove, and Rod and Gun Club fishing tournament.

The proposed sponsorship is primarily to provide insurance coverage for the dance and would not change the Lions Club’s role as the primary organizer of Fountain City Days. The City’s existing insurance policy would cover the event at no additional cost.

The dance is estimated to cost approximately \$1,000, with remaining funds expected to come from donations and community support. The Economic Development Committee

would coordinate event logistics, including entertainment and street closure, with the event planned from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Council members expressed support for the collaboration, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the Lions Club's longstanding leadership while working together to expand community events, encourage local business support, and increase community engagement.

Motion P. Schaffner, second C. Williamson to sponsor the Fountain City Days Dance in conjunction with and in support of the Lion's Club on August 15, 2026. Motion carried 6-0.

Motion C. Williamson, second S. Feraro to approve the special event permit and application for the Fountain City Lion's Festival for August 15, 2026. Motion carried 6-0.

Motion S. Feraro, second C. Williamson to approve the Operator's License for Heather Zastrow, MaryLee J. Flury, Alyssa Marty, Mercedes LaBonne, Brandi Helgeson. Motion carried 6-0.

Motion B. Schmidtknecht, second S. Feraro to approve the accounts payable. Motion carried 6-0.

Motion S. Feraro, second B. Schmidtknecht to adjourn at 6:57 pm. Motion carried 6-0.