



City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
Five Points Banquet Room - 360 N. Wilmor Road, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Liliya Stevens called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., with a quorum present.

Roll Call *Present:* Alderpersons Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder
Absent: Alderpersons Blundy, Smith

Also Present City Administrator Jeff Fiegenschuh, Finance Director Paulette Hurd, Outgoing Finance Director Joanie Baxter, City Engineer Dennis Carr, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Sergeant Brian Simpson, City Treasurer Carol Crocker, City Clerk Valeri Brod, City Attorney Mark Walton, and Press

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Stevens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentation None provided.

Audience Comments None provided.

Deletions/Additions None provided.

Consent Agenda Mayor Stevens presented the Consent Agenda for approval of the following items:

- A. Approve February 2, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Approve Additional Purchase Authorization - Public Works Storage/Police Evidence Building Repairs
- C. Approve Bills and Payroll
- D. Accept Monthly Reports for Period Ended January 31, 2026

Aldersperson Ernst motioned to approve; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded.

Regarding Item B, Public Works Director Rittenhouse clarified that this is to bring the roof of the building located at 101 Jefferson Street up to code as it is being repaired due to fire damage.

6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Mayoral Communication Mayor Stevens shared that this event will be held at the American Legion on Legion Road on *Let's Talk Washington* February 24 from 5–6 p.m. It is a casual gathering, and everyone is welcome.

Reappointment of Jeff Mayor Stevens explained that this term had expired and in need of reappointment.

Labuz to the Washington Aldersperson Johnson motioned to approve; Aldersperson McIntyre seconded.

Fire Department Board of 6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

Directors 0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

City Administrator Communication City Administrator Fiegenschuh noted that he is starting his fifth week with the City and is working on several projects and performance items. He is planning to hold a strategic planning session using Arndt Municipal.
City Administrator Report to Mayor and Council City Engineer Carr explained that a bid opening was held last week for the Catherine Street project, and they received a bid lower than what is provided on the presentation slide. The low bidder is Stark at approximately \$1.51 million. This will come before the Council for approval.

FY26/27 Budget Kickoff/Capital Overview City Administrator Fiegenschuh explained that he is focusing on learning about our budget process and introduced the department heads to provide the budget details.

City Engineer Carr shared a story map presentation created by the GIS department. He asked Council to bring additional items forward if they would like them addressed. Some highlighted details included:

- The Catherine and Grandyle projects were on target.
- They are doing ADA work at several locations on the east side of town.
- They are finishing a few details on the IDOT project on the Square and Peoria Street.
- The Safe Routes to School project, benefiting District 50 students, was slightly over budget but was mostly covered in the grant.
- Englewood Drive was going to be an MFT project, but the surface was too thin so our crew will mill and overlay it.
- The topcoat on the water tower and ditch repairs behind Sunnyland plaza are complete.
- Candlewood Bridge continues to deteriorate. Headwalls have fallen. They hope to complete the renovation by the end of the fiscal year.
- They will seek quotes for a drainage ditch on Constitution.

Regarding next year:

- Older parts of town need attention due to aging infrastructure.
- The third phase of the Catherine project will begin.
- The Elgin sidewalk extension will be constructed this summer, connecting the new project with a previous Safe Routes project. This will benefit District 51 students.
- The storm sewers northeast of the Square will be updated.
- Bondurant will be addressed due to multiple water main breaks that affected the school.
- The Sunnyland Water Redundancy project will be designed to provide a backup to the current system and will be completed in two phases.
- The North and South Main Street bridges should be replaced soon.
- A drainage priority project near Washington Estates will require direction from Council to move forward.
- The project on Pine Tree was budgeted last year but was deferred to accommodate the mill and overlay at the Square. It will be brought forward again.
- S. Wilmor should receive a mill and overlay.
- W. Jefferson will be completed as an in-house paving project.
- Two new access roads will be constructed in the cemetery.
- The fire-damaged Jefferson Building will be addressed.
- Sanitary lining will take place.
- Trojan UV Phase 1 will begin. The wastewater treatment plant uses UV to help disinfect, and some system components require replacement and upgrades.

Public Works Director Rittenhouse explained the following regarding equipment:

- The City has been borrowing a piece of equipment but could save about \$5,000–\$15,000 per year by purchasing the equipment and completing projects in-house.
- Two older plow trucks are being considered for replacement. Staff has been pleased with the performance of the Western Star trucks previously purchased.
- The asphalt roller is approximately 10 years old and may need to be replaced soon. As larger projects have been completed in-house, a larger machine could be helpful.
- The five-year-old backhoe is experiencing issues and may need to be replaced.

City Engineer Carr invited members to contact staff with any questions. He noted that several projects will require priority direction from the Council, including the Lakeshore/Freedom extension, the recommendations from the citywide space study, IDOT/US 24 improvements, and water rates.

Outgoing Finance Director Baxter shared that she and Finance Director Hurd have been working together to provide the Council with spreadsheets showing year-to-year progress and five-year projections. They presented a PowerPoint outlining projects by fiscal year. She noted:

- Staff needs guidance on the FY27 items to be included in the budget.
- The PowerPoint spreadsheets break down information by fund.
- The two items under the Stormwater Capital Project will utilize the remaining portion of the \$5 million bond, which must be spent by October 2026.

- The 0.5% home rule sales tax generated funds for debt service, which continues after project completion and will help cover other stormwater expenses.
- The total FY27 Capital Plan is \$7,827,000, and the total five-year plan is \$63,881,000.

Regarding the Elgin sidewalk extension, Mr. Carr explained that it is located between Grandyle and Boblink and would complete the sidewalk. All favored moving forward.

Regarding the Washington Estates drainage pond, Mayor Stevens requested discussion to be brought back at a future meeting. Alderperson McIntyre favored moving forward, noting that a sales tax is in place to address water issues, or the tax should be reconsidered.

Mayor Stevens also requested a review of the stormwater study priorities for new Council members. Alderperson Martin felt staff should proceed with negotiations to provide additional information for Council consideration. Regarding the project on Pine Tree, it was moved from the 2026 budget to the 2027 budget and swapped funding with the Square paving project.

Mr. Rittenhouse clarified:

- CIPP lining is budgeted at approximately \$300,000 and progress has been made over several years.
- The sewer lift station PLC improvements design was approved by the Council, and additional items will be brought forward for Council consideration.
- The City continues to set aside \$200,000 per year for a new Public Works building.
- The new cemetery building is estimated at approximately \$500,000.

Alderperson McIntyre requested pricing for completing both UV Phase 1 and Phase 2 this year, questioning whether it could reduce overall costs. The estimate for brine is \$50,000 if completed this year.

Engineer Carr noted that the Phase 2B project is included in the capital plan but may continue to be deferred. The loan application process must be submitted in March, which only places the City in line for consideration. He added that political pressure can affect timing.

Proposed 122 N. Main Redevelopment Project City Administrator Fiegenschuh explained that if the Council chooses to move forward, this item will return in the form of a resolution. Mr. Oliphant shared that updated quotes were included in the packet and that the overall project cost has decreased to \$383,426.30. He noted that the *Financial Assistance* project will be completed in phases and that the third payment is proposed to occur after tenant leases are signed. Staff recommends specifying that lessees be retail businesses rather than service-based businesses. Cliff Vieira, the requester, stated that this is a complicated project and noted that renovating older buildings can be expensive. They have worked to scale back items to help reduce costs. Structural work has begun, and he offered tours for Council members.

Continued Discussion City Administrator Fiegenschuh acknowledged Mr. Oliphant's exceptional work, stating that it is the best analysis he has seen. Consensus supported staff's recommendations, including amendments to help protect the City. Mr. Oliphant clarified that page 8 includes a spreadsheet proposing an equal three-term payout. This proposal does not include an increment and does not require reimbursement of prior payments. Mr. Vieira shared that they previously rehabilitated Crafted Loft Studio in Peoria and have included insulation costs in this project, which will allow them to expose architectural elements such as rafters.

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Resolutions City Administrator Fiegenschuh presented the following for consideration:

R-1460 (4-26) Request to Release Federal Interest of USDA Grant **Synopsis:** Adoption of this resolution would remove United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development's federal interest in the City of Washington's revolving loan fund and commit to the continued use of the funds for economic development purposes. **Title:** Request to

Release Federal Interest of USDA Grant

No questions were provided by Council.

Alderperson McIntyre motioned to approve; Alderperson Ernst seconded.

6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

2nd Read Ordinances City Administrator Fiegenschuh presented the following for consideration:

3612 (2-26) Approve the Allowance of Remote Attendance for City Boards and Commissions **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend the City of Washington Code to authorize members of City Boards and Commissions to electronically attend their respective meetings.

Title: Approve the Allowance of Remote Attendance for City Boards and Commissions
No questions were provided by Council.

Alderperson Ernst motioned to approve; Alderperson Martin seconded.

6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

3613 (3-26) Approve City Administrator Fiegenschuh presented the following for consideration:
Establishment of a Second Deputy Chief of Police Position **Synopsis:** Adoption of this ordinance would amend the City of Washington Code regarding the police command structure to authorize a second deputy police chief. **Title:** Approve Establishment of a Second Deputy Chief of Police Position

No questions were provided by Council.

Alderson Sluder motioned to approve; Alderson McIntyre seconded.

6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Alderson Comments Alderson Martin expressed his appreciation for the Story Map. He favors looking further into the Lakeshore extension and stormwater improvements.
Alderson McIntyre agreed and would like some development on Freedom before a major investment.
Alderson Sluder agreed and shared that Lets Talk Ward One will take place on Wednesday in the library at 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Alderson Martin and Mayor Stevens noted the accomplishments of the Pantherettes and many the wins from WCHS athletics.

Executive Session *At 7:36 p.m. Alderson Sluder motioned and Alderson McIntyre seconded to move into executive session for:*

5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) – the discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated

5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) – litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting

6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by voice vote.

Approve Executive At 8:03 p.m. Council resumed regular session.

Session Meeting Alderson Moss motioned to table the approval Executive Session Meeting Minutes for Minutes for Meetings Occurring in 2025; Alderson McIntyre seconded

Meetings in 2025 6 Ayes: Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder

0 Nays:

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Adjournment At 8:06 p.m. *Alderson Ernst moved to adjourn; Alderson McIntyre seconded.*

Motion carried by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk