



AGENDA FOR THE WORK SESSION AND THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
ALBERT LEA CITY COUNCIL – March 23, 2026  
WORK SESSION – 5:30 PM – REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 PM

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**WORK SESSION – 5:30 PM**

- I. DEMOLITION LANDFILL LONG-TERM FEASIBILITY PRESENTATION –  
TREVOR ROMANKO – SEH INC.
- II. REVIEW COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF MARCH 23, 2026

**REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 PM**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- III. **CEREMONIAL ITEMS**
- IV. **PUBLIC FORUM**
- V. **CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
  - A. Approve Minutes of the March 09, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
  - B. Approve Minutes of the March 09, 2026 Work Session
  - C. License & Permits
  - D. Resolution Authorizing Application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for Lead Service Lines Replacement Project Grant Funding City Job Number 2606
- VI. **PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**
  - A. Nation of Patriots Tour 2026 Presentation - Glenville Legion Riders Scott Kallberg and Larry Larson
- VII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
  - A. Ordinance 26-153 Amending Chapter 50, Article II, Division 1, Section 50.0052 (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)
  - B. Resolution Approving Publication Summary of Ordinance 26-153



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**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Public Hearing and Resolution Authorizing Submission of an Application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- B. Approval of Retail Cannabis Registration – Big Dream Organics, LLC, Jerry and Angie Collins
- C. Approval of Retail Cannabis Registration – Brenda Zamora dba Aficionados, LLC
- D. Resolution Authorizing Funds Transfer
- E. Resolution Accepting Bid and Awarding Contract for the 2026 CIPP Rehabilitation Project (Job 2607)
- F. Resolution Approving Variance to Permitted Uses for 409 W Clark Street
- G. Resolution Approving or Denying Variance to Side Yard Setback Requirements for 915 Autumn Street

**IX. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

**X. CITY MANAGER REPORT**

**XI. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

- A. Resolution Approving Claims
  - (1) Presentation of Claims Over \$25,000

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Disclaimer: This agenda has been prepared to provide information regarding an upcoming meeting of the City Council of the City of Albert Lea. This document does not claim to be complete and is subject to change**



City Manager Report to Council  
221 East Clark Street, Albert Lea, MN 56007  
(507) 377-4330 – [info@ci.albertlea.mn.us](mailto:info@ci.albertlea.mn.us)

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**To: Mayor and City Council**  
**From: City Manager**  
**Date: March 23, 2026**  
**Re: March 23, 2026 City Council Meeting**

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V. CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. Licenses & Permits –

**FIREWORKS (STORE SALES)**

*Phantom Fireworks Store Sales, LLC at Home Depot*

- D. Resolution Authorizing Application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for Lead Service Lines Replacement Project Grant Funding - Job 2606 - The 2023 Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$240 million for lead service line replacements and approximately \$40 million per year in federal funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is also available. To access these funds, public water systems apply through the Drinking Water Revolving Fund, which is jointly administered by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Public Facilities Authority (PFA).

The City of Albert Lea applied for \$1.5 million dollars of grant funding to replace approximately 150 private and public lead water services in 2024, and again in 2025; this money was awarded, and the City has applied again in 2026. The City has been notified that the City is eligible for \$1,000,000 of this funding and is working through the grant process and preparing the plans and specifications. The attached resolution authorizing the application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for the Lead Service Lines Replacement Project is one of the requirements of this grant.

See attached resolution.

VI. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Nation of Patriots Tour 2026 Presentation – Glenville Legion Riders Scott Kallberg and Larry Larson

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Ordinance 26-153 Amending Chapter 50 Article II Sec. 50.0052 Conditional Uses (2nd Reading) The amendment to this ordinance is related to a conditional use permit. Currently, these permits expire if construction does not begin within 12 months of approval. However, post-COVID challenges, such as labor shortages, increased construction costs, and supply chain delays, have made it difficult for developers to start projects on time. To address this, staff recommends allowing a permit extension beyond the 12-month deadline, as long as the project remains unchanged from the originally approved conditional use permit. Staff recommends approval of this final reading.

See attached ordinance.

- B. Resolution Approving Publication Summary - Ordinance 26-153 – *Ordinance Summaries may be published if they reasonably inform the public of the effect and intent of the Ordinance. Summaries fulfill all legal requirements as if the entire summarized matter had been published, and also direct the public on how to obtain the complete Ordinance.*

See attached resolution.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Public Hearing and Resolution Authorizing Submission of an Application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) -The attached resolution approves the submission of a Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) Grant for the purpose of rehabilitating local housing stock. The City of Albert Lea partnered with South Eastern Minnesota Community Action Council (SEMCAC) on a grant application that targets the areas of Fountain, Clark, Water and William Street. Funds are granted to local units of government, which, in turn, lend the funds in order to benefit those of low- and moderate-income levels.

*The final grant request is for \$431,250 and is due to MN DEED on April 15, 2026.  
Cindy Vitse from SEMCAC will be available to answer any questions.*

See attached resolution.

B. Approval of Retail Cannabis Registration – Jerry and Angie Collins dba Big Dream Organics, LLC – After thorough review, including criminal history, it is determined that the applicant is eligible. In determining the registration of one of the four available openings within the City of Albert Lea, the applicant has:

- A history of managing and/or owning a retail establishment.
- No known behaviors or actions as to cause a denial or revocation of registration under Sec 5.030 and Section 5.031.
- Location of d/b/a 1039 Broadway Avenue South is appropriately zoned.

Approval is contingent on the condition that in 30 days the front window vinyl is changed to meet State Statute and Local Ordinances on sign content. Staff is recommending a thirty (30) day period to correct, as the owner is faced with zoning requirements between front window requirements in the B2 District while transitioning from low potency cannabis retail to cannabis retail.

C. Approval of Retail Cannabis Registration – Brenda Zamora dba Aficionados, LLC  
After thorough review, including criminal history, it is determined that the applicant is eligible. In determining the registration of one of the four available openings within the City of Albert Lea the applicant has:

- A history of managing and/or owning a retail establishment.
- No known behaviors or actions as to cause a denial or revocation of registration under Sec 5.030 and Section 5.031.
- Location of d/b/a 2006 Main Street East is appropriately zoned.

Approval requires that at the time of beginning cannabis retail operations all food services cease at the location.

D. Resolution Authorizing Funds Transfer – *As a result of the City Hall remodel project not moving forward, a transfer of \$123,831.62 is required to settle the outstanding architectural expenses. Had the project moved forward, funding would have been*

*from the General Fund, Water Fund, Sewer Fund, Building Maintenance Fund, and a levy from the issuance of debt. The \$123,831.62 is allocated as follows: 60% to the Building Maintenance Fund, 20% to the Water Fund and 20% to the Sewer Fund.*

See attached resolution.

E. Resolution Accepting Bid & Awarding Contract for the 2026 CIPP Rehabilitation Project - Job 2607 - *Engineering has reviewed the bids opened Tuesday, March 17, 2026 for the 2026 CIPP Rehabilitation Project. The project involves installing a cured in place pipe liner inside of the existing sanitary sewer mains in the following locations:*

- *South Shore Drive - 791' at Stormwater Pond*
- *Court Lane - Vine Avenue to Lakeview Boulevard*
- *Lakeshore Drive – Lakeview Boulevard to Lee Place*

*Engineering received three bids. Engineering is recommending the low bid of \$173,529.72 from Municipal Pipe Tool Company, LLC of Hudson, Iowa. The Engineer's Estimate was \$264,255. The bid abstract is attached. Staff recommends approval.*

See attached resolution and bid abstract.

F. Resolution Approving Variance to Permitted Uses for 409 W Clark Street – *The City of Albert Lea received a proposal for modular housing placement at 409 W Clark Street. In 2013, the area known as Clark and Water Street was re-zoned from Residential Preservation (RP) to Diversified Central District (DCD) with the hopes of stimulating higher density residential developments within walking distance of the downtown. The DCD does not permit single-family residential uses and as such the proposed modular house requires a variance as a permitted use.*

*The Board of Appeals met on March 17, 2026 to conduct a public hearing to consider a variance application from the City of Albert Lea to allow a single-family residence in the Diversified Central District and recommends approval based on the findings of facts stated in the attached resolution.*

See attached resolution.

- G. Resolution Approving or Denying Variance to Yard Setback Requirements for 915 Autumn Street – *The City of Albert Lea received a proposal for modular housing placement at 915 Autumn Street. The model proposed is 1,128 sq. ft with overall measurements of 32ftx40ft plus an additional 16ft for an attached garage. The property at 915 Autumn is a 66ft wide lot that requires 10% of the lot frontage in side yard setbacks or a total of 6ft on each side. In order to accommodate the attached garage and modest space on each side, the applicant is proposing a reduced side yard setback of 5ft which requires a variance.*

*The Board of Appeals met on March 17, 2026 to conduct a public hearing to consider a variance application from the City of Albert Lea for reduced side yard setbacks and did not come to a unanimous or majority decision.*

See attached resolution.

XI. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

- A. Resolution Approving Claims – The attached resolution directs the Mayor and City Treasurer to issue the payment of claims as presented in the Detail of Claims report.
- (1). Large Claims Over \$25,000 – When applicable, staff will present and display any claims over \$25,000 for the public’s viewing, transparency and education.

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA  
March 9, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, 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 City Clerk Daphney Maras.

Councilor Ted Herman attended via Zoom

**ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT:** Chief of Police Darren Hanson, Planning/Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen.

**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**

Commendation Awards presented to Sergeant Alex Kunkel and Officer Josh Knudtson

Police Chief Hanson commended Sergeant Kunkel and Officer Knudtson for their superior performance on January 22, 2026 in response to an Amber Alert, which resulted in the safe recovery of a missing child and the apprehension of the suspect. He also acknowledged the valuable assistance provided by City of Albert Lea Sergeant Sy Vanthavong and Officer Greg Calbick, as well as Deputy Jarvis Burgett of the Sheriff's Department.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Jerry Collins, an Albert Lea business owner, addressed the Council, urging the Council to adopt a resolution requesting that the State of Minnesota restore the municipal share of cannabis tax revenue. He stated that if local governments are responsible for regulating the industry and addressing its impacts, they should receive a share of the revenue it generates.

**CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- A. Approve Minutes of the February 23, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the February 23, 2026 Work Session
- C. License & Permits
- D. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering Bids for the 2026 Neighborhood Improvement Project (Job 2601)
- E. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering Bids for the 2026 State Aid Street Overlay Project (Job 2602)
- F. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering Bids for the St. Mary Avenue & 14th Street

Reconstruction Project (Job 2603)

- G. Resolution Acknowledging Bids for the Eberhart Street Utility & Street Improvements for the Albert Lea Family Housing Project (Tapestry Project)
- H. Resolution Approving Application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Clean Water Revolving Fund

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve the consent agenda as read, 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 26-044 through 26-048  
(Included with these minutes)

**PETITIONS, REQUESTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS** - None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Resolution 26-049 Approving the Strategic Plan for the Albert Lea Public Library**

The Albert Lea Public Library underwent a strategic planning process in 2025 to develop a strategic plan to guide library services that meet the needs of the community for the next three years. Facilitated by SELCO, our regional library system, the process included a public survey, a staff workshop, and a stakeholder workshop. In addition, feedback from the Library Advisory Board, informal feedback from the community, and data from SELCO's Community Needs Assessment, which was conducted in 2022, were taken into consideration when developing the plan. The result is the included three-year strategic plan for the Albert Lea Public Library for 2026-2028. The plan was approved by the Library Advisory Board at the November 19, 2025, meeting.

Library Director Annice Seveti provided a summary of the strategic planning process and outcomes with the slide presentation previously shown at the work session.

Motion made by Councilor Christensen to approve as read, 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 26-049  
(Included with these minutes)

**B. Ordinance 26-153 Amending Section 50.0052 Conditional Uses (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**

Attached is an ordinance amending the expiration of conditional use permits. Currently, conditional use permits expire if construction hasn't started within 12 months of city council approval. This has become problematic in a post-COVID construction era where the industry is

plagued by persistent labor shortages, higher costs, and supply chain disruptions. All of which leads to hesitant developers and project delays.

In order to streamline conditional use permits that may be delayed for any of the above-mentioned reasons, staff has proposed to amend the conditional use permit ordinance to allow an extension after the 12-month timeframe, provided that all aspects of the original conditional use permit remain the same.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on March 3, 2026 in regard to this amendment and recommends approval.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, 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 Ordinance 26-153  
(Included with these minutes)

### **C. Resolution 26-050 Approving Broadway Ridge Grant at 216 S. Broadway**

John and Adeline Rust submitted a Broadway Ridge Renewal Grant for reimbursement up to 50% of the costs associated with a complete roof replacement at 216 S Broadway. The total improvement cost is \$26,850, which will provide a matching grant of \$13,425.00. All improvements have been completed and reviewed by the City's Zoning and Building Official for compliance with application requirements.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, 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 26-050  
(Included with these minutes)

### **D. Resolution 26-051 Approving Final Plat of Lutheran Third Subdivision**

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on March 3, 2026 to review the Plat of Lutheran Third Subdivision for compliance with Chapter 38 Subdivisions.

The purpose of the plat is to subdivide or separate Knutson Place from Saint John's so that both properties are situated on two separate parcels.

The proposed plat also designates a 20ft wide utility easement on the North side of the Saint John's lot to accommodate existing utilities and to ensure utilities can be accessed between two roadways (Luther Place and State Highway No. 13) and accommodate any future watermain looping.

The Final Plat of Lutheran Third Subdivision meets all the requirements of Chapter 38-Subdivisions, and the Planning Commission recommends approval.

City Manager Rigg explained that during the Planning Commission's public hearing, concerns were raised about whether the subdivision could lead to changes in property ownership. He clarified that an existing easement and an ordinance in place require any such change to be approved by both property owners.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, seconded by Councilor Christensen. 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 26-051  
(Included with these minutes)

**E. Resolution 26-052 Approving Land Surveyor's Certificate of Plat Correction – Blazing Star No. 2**

The plat of Blazing Star No. 2 prepared by Steven J. Thompson, a licensed land surveyor, contained errors, omissions or defects. The attached resolution corrects those errors as described in Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

Motion made by Councilor Anderson to approve as read, 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 26-052  
(Included with these minutes)

**F. Resolution 26-053 Authorizing City Manager to Dispose of Property Through Request for Proposal**

The City has acquired some property in the last year or was not presented to Council as an option to dispose last year. Given there is interest in City properties for redevelopment, it is recommended that the Council open up more parcels and continue its incentives for development.

This resolution allows the manager to seek proposals and negotiate the disposal and/or redevelopment of the listed properties. This resolution also authorizes the continuation of the previous action of offering \$5,000 for new housing development and the \$5,000 for new utility connection costs.

The new items in this resolution, compared to what was approved in spring of 2025 is first add a rebate of up to \$20,000 for demolition costs. This can reduce the time in which a lot sits empty, and the builder can align their demolition with their site work or foundation work. Furthermore, we can now be approached by a developer looking to buy land without City intervention, yet still have

the same impact and cost without City ownership. Last, this states this effort and spending is not a grant or right, rather a temporary incentive negotiated and approved on a case-by-case basis through a development agreement.

Creating a new grant process for housing should be looked at holistically with other incentives for housing, considering if the City has received certain state grants and the expiration of tax abatement policies on December 31, 2026.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to approve as read, 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 26-053  
(Included with these minutes)

**G. Resolution 26-054 Authorizing Staff to Accept Donation of Property - 819 Garfield Ave.**

The owner of the property at 819 Garfield Ave. has told City staff that he intends to give the property to the City. This property will be marketed for redevelopment first, with a reimbursement for demolition of the structure if authorized in the previous resolution. Otherwise, staff will seek competitive quotes for demolition and level the lot.

Motion made by Councilor Olson to approve as read, 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 26-054  
(Included with these minutes)

**H(1) Resolution Accepting Bid, Awarding Contract and Approving Change Orders for Upper and Lower Remodeling of the City Center Building**

City Manager Rigg explained that, following the previous council meeting, he was asked to bring the item back with additional options for consideration. He then presented all four options in detail before the council proceeded to vote.

To Councilor Baker's question, Rigg clarified that option #1 would have open space on the upper and lower levels, while option #2 would only open up the lower level.

Councilor Christensen noted that the options were being presented so soon after the previous meeting's vote because the bid is nearing expiration. She asked whether an extension had been considered. Rigg stated that he could request one if the council believed it would assist their deliberations, though it was unlikely to be granted. Building/Zoning Official Sorensen agreed, adding that this bid was the lowest one received.

Councilor Baker noted that one of his constituents expressed support for the project, provided the council secures the best possible bid. He added that he recognizes taxes are increasing for everyone and wants residents to know that the council is committed to acting in their best interest.

This resolution reduces the award amount and budget from \$1,932,600 to \$1,541,150. Of the \$1,541,150, there is about \$865,000 in eventual costs through upkeep and replacement within the building. This is the budget moving forward, leaving about \$45,000 in eventual CIP starting in 2027, as it is not included in this project. Total cost is \$1,586,150 over the next 5 years, with 97% completed in 2026.

Reductions include:

- South-Facing Windows
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ADA Ramp
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting Space on the lower level
- Reduced Contingency
- Removal of Wellness and Break room on upper level
- Mid-Level pole and hose tower hole “fill in”.
- Reuse of existing cameras instead of full replacement
- Furniture reduction as a result of some reuse and no public meeting room on lower level.

Assuming Options 2 will have \$250,000 in bonding while Options 3 and 4 will trigger approximately \$20K increase in levy due to Fund 406 depletion, roughly this project costs \$7,000 more annually in levy than all three. This project also brings forward the greatest operational savings compared to Options 2 - 4.

This resolution also amends the Capital Improvement Plan by removing \$535,000 in the 2026 budget and leaves room to process an estimated \$45,000 in future costs over the next 4 years through the 2027 Budget process.

Councilor Anderson moved to approve option H(1); however, the motion failed for lack of a second. Mayor Murray declared the resolution failed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution FAILED  
(Included with these minutes)

**H(2) Resolution Accepting Bid, Awarding Contract and Approving Change Orders for Lower Remodeling of the City Center Building; Amending 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan**

This resolution reduces the award amount and budget from \$1,201,600 to \$886,500. With this approval, there is an immediate change to the 2026 CIP of \$111,750 and eventual costs through upkeep and replacement within the building, totaling \$355,000 more. Total cost is \$1,353,250 over the next 5 years, with 74% completed in 2026.

Reductions include:

- South-Facing Windows
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ADA Ramp
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting Space on the lower level
- Reduced Contingency
- Reuse of existing cameras instead of full replacement
- Furniture reduction as a result of no public meeting room on lower level.

Assuming Options 2 will have \$250,000 in bonding while Options 3 and 4 will trigger approximately \$20K increase in levy due to Fund 406 depletion, roughly this project costs \$7,000 less than Option 1 or the same as Options 3 and 4 annually. This project alleviates staff crowding in the lower level and adds some minor security upgrades at the same annual cost of doing basic upkeep in Options 3 and 4.

Motion made by Councilor Baker to accept option H(2), seconded by Councilor Olson.

Councilor Christensen stated that she is very torn on the decision. She noted that the public entrusts the council to evaluate all available information and acknowledged that Option H(1) is the most cost-effective plan for managing City Hall. She also recognized that the community remains uneasy following last year's significant tax increases, as well as concerns about the national economy and global events.

Councilor Christensen emphasized that the City Manager and Mayor provide strong leadership and that the city is in a solid financial position. She stated that, because she believes certain components of the project are necessary, she will support Option H(2). Although it is not the most cost-effective option, she said it reflects the preference expressed by the public.

In response to Councilor Anderson's request, City Manager Rigg reviewed the expense figures associated with Option H(2). He noted that although Option H(2) does not provide the same financial advantages as Option H(1), it would improve functionality and efficiency by reducing staff crowding.

Councilor Van Beek stated that he has voted against this remodel in the past and will not support this resolution. He reported touring the lower floor last week and believes it is most prudent to utilize the existing space in that area. He reiterated his position that government employees are most effective when working in the office. He also noted that he has not received any positive comments from the public in support of a remodel.

Councilor Herman also reported he has not received any positive comments and his constituents thanked him for voting against the remodel in the past.

Rigg responded to Van Beek and Christensen's comments about potentially waiting to see whether the library expansion moves forward and coordinating portions of the City Hall remodel with that project. He said that if the Council chooses that approach, he recommends skipping

options H(1), H(2), and H(3) and proceeding directly to option H(4), which focuses on minimal repairs.

Mayor Murray explained that he has gone back and forth on the remodel project. He shared that he spoke with hundreds of residents over the weekend, and not one expressed support for moving forward. He emphasized that regardless of how the project is financed, it will still have an impact on taxes, and there is no simple solution.

He stated that if the motion passes, the community can count on him to closely monitor the finances, work with the City Manager, and ensure that no money is spent beyond what is necessary, just as is done every day. If the motion does not pass, he said the council and staff will need to return to the drawing board to determine what repairs are essential and how to address them. He supports doing something with the lower level to alleviate the crowded workspace.

Councilor Christensen asked for clarification on which option best aligns with the council's comments this evening. Rigg explained that if the long-term plan is to return later for a full remodel, Option H(3) would be a poor investment because it requires repairs that would later need to be undone. Option H(4) is minimal and does not include any remodeling. Option H(1) remains the most cost-effective choice, despite public concerns about a potentially large tax impact. Option H(2) offers significant operational improvements, but without the same level of cost savings.

The following councilors voted in favor of said motion: Baker, Olson, and Christensen. And the following voted nay: Councilors Christensen, Herman, Van Beek, Anderson, and Mayor Murray. Mayor Murray declared the motion failed.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution FAILED  
(Included with these minutes)

### **H(3) Resolution Amending 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan**

This project is removing the City Center Renovation Project from the 2026 CIP and changing it to piecemeal, more immediate needs without improvements to the structure or the electrical system. The total 5-year cost is estimated at \$865,000, with \$483,750 in 2026 and the rest over the next 4 years. The advantage of this Option over Option 4 is the operational costs and logistics of moving the lower-level office once instead of multiple times.

No motion was made to support this resolution. Mayor Murray declared the resolution failed due to a lack of a motion.

(See Secretary's Original Resolution FAILED  
(Included with these minutes)

### **H(4) Resolution 26-055 Amending 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan for Limited Preservation and Security**

This project is the same eventual cost as Option 3 over 5 years, only spending \$206,750 in 2026 and adding unknown costs of multiple office rearrangements and moves.

City Manager Rigg requested authorization to at least proceed with Option H(4) that includes replacing certain door locks and installing additional security monitors.

Councilor Anderson said he feels this is kicking the can down the road and believes there will be looming problems on the horizon, and repairs will hit the levy hard in the future.

Motion made by Councilor Olson to approve the City Manager's request with Option H(4) for \$166,750. 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 26-055  
(Included with these minutes)

### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

First Ward, Councilor Christensen reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Planning Commission meeting last week regarding the Lutheran Place Condos. The Senior Center Advisory Board is planning an upcoming Health Fair on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The Blue Zones is staying active, and the YMCA has opened its walking track to the public during lunch hour. Age Friendly Freeborn County will be presenting a program on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Fire Station, titled "Preventing Fraud and Scams." The Budget Committee has started the budget meetings.

Second Ward, Councilor Baker reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – He said regarding the HRA Duplex project. He said the core drilling has been completed and expects a complete report next week.

Third Ward, Councilor Herman reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – None

Fourth Ward, Councilor Olson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Reported that as a continuation of the dead deer he spoke of at the last council meeting was caused by over eating and not related to Chronic Wasting disease.

Fifth Ward, Councilor Van Beek reported:

- Ward Items – Staff has assisted him with his ward items.

- Committee Update – Will be attending the Human Rights Commission meeting on Thursday.

Sixth Ward, Councilor Anderson reported:

- Ward Items – None
- Committee Update – Attended the Budget Meeting, where they focused on the CIP. Attended the HRA Board meeting and was disappointed that the study revealed the two homes could not be built on the empty lots as planned.

### **MAYOR REPORT:**

Reported the following and provided details of each:

- Toured the home that Robert Modderman built and is ready to put on the market for sale. The lot is one that the city sold him for \$5000, and he made good use of it.
- Visited Green Acres-Old Mill for a tour. He reported he was very impressed with the progress
- Attended the Historical Society fundraiser at the Moose Lodge. He commended the Moose Lodge for always being willing to support the community
- Attended the High School Choir Concert
- On March 3<sup>rd</sup> met with DRC and Vortex and discussed ways to utilize energy
- Attended the AL Boys Basketball tournament
- Attended the Orrie Jirele Fundraiser
- Attended the AL High School Inspirational Wall Tribute
- Gave a shout-out to the ALHS Robotics team who participated in the State tournament and to Mock Trial
- 2026 MMBL E-Sports State Tournament
- Congratulated Landon Utke of Albert Lea for making the US Paralympic Sled Hockey Team

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

### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

- Will be attending Legislative Day at the Capitol on Wednesday, along with Councilors Christensen, Baker, and Anderson. They will primarily be discussing key items such as the WWTP and the Sales Tax.
- Supports the public comment made earlier regarding restoring the cannabis tax to local government.
- Submitted a request for \$5 million to Finseth's office for the WWTP facility
- Met with the Budget committee
- He and the Human Resource Director has finalized some personnel policy items
- Will be working on some arrangements at City Hall regarding cubicles.

### **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

#### **A. Resolution 26-056 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 Baker to approve as read, 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 Ordinance 26-056  
(Included with these minutes)

Councilor Christensen motioned for adjournment; Councilor Van Beek seconded. 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, March 23, 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: 8:45 PM**

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Mayor Rich Murray

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Daphney Maras  
Secretary of the Council

**WORK SESSION MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF ALBERT LEA  
March 9, 2026 - 5:30 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Rich Murray, Councilors Rachel Christensen, Larry Baker, Reid Olson, Keith Van Beek, Brian Anderson, City Manager Ian Rigg, Public Works Director Steven Jahnke, City Attorney Joel Holstad of Lake National Law LLP, and City Clerk Daphney Maras.

Councilor Ted Herman attended via Zoom

**ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT:** Chief of Police Darren Hanson, Finance Director Kristi Brutlag, Planning/Zoning Official Wayne Sorensen, Human Resource Director Mike Zelenak, Engagement & Enrichment Director Cathy Malakowsky.

**I. DISCUSSION ON SIDEWALK IN CENTRAL PARK**

At Councilor Baker's request during the previous council meeting, Public Works Director Jahnke delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining the anticipated costs and construction needs for adding a sidewalk along the east side of Central Park. He noted that four large trees would need to be removed and estimated the total project cost at approximately \$63,832.10.

Councilor Christensen acknowledged that a sidewalk in that area would be beneficial, but she finds the loss of four large trees unacceptable. She does not believe sacrificing those trees for a few months of seasonal use is justified and therefore cannot support the project. Councilor Baker agreed that losing the four trees wasn't justified. He then suggested to Jahnke that a walkway be cleared during the winter so people could walk across the street to the church. Jahnke agreed to explore that option. Jahnke responded to Councilor Herman that replacing the four trees would cost approximately \$2,000–\$3,000. City Manager Rigg asked whether the council wished to proceed with the bid process for the project. The mayor and council agreed that, due to the cost and the loss of the trees, it would not be prudent to move forward at this time.

**REVIEW COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF MARCH 9, 2026**

City Manager Rigg walked through each agenda item and addressed the council's questions. He also noted that, because Councilor Herman is participating via Zoom, the Mayor will need to conduct a roll call vote for each item during the regular council meeting.

**CEREMONIAL ITEMS**

Commendation Awards presented to Sergeant Alex Kunkel and Officer Josh Knudtson

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- A. Approve Minutes of the February 23, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of the February 23, 2026 Work Session
- C. License & Permits
- D. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering Bids for the 2026 Neighborhood Improvement Project (Job 2601)

Councilor Baker requested clarification on the projected schedule for street assessments in relation to the amounts charged to residential properties. Jahnke responded by outlining the assessment structure as follows:

- Less than \$2000, it is one-year
  - \$2000-\$5000 – Five years
  - \$5000-\$10,000 – 10 years
  - Over \$10,000 – 15 years
- E. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering Bids for the 2026 State Aid Street Overlay Project (Job 2602)
  - F. Resolution Approving Plans and Ordering Bids for the St. Mary Avenue & 14th Street Reconstruction Project (Job 2603)
  - G. Resolution Acknowledging Bids for the Eberhart Street Utility & Street Improvements for the Albert Lea Family Housing Project (Tapestry Project)
  - H. Resolution Approving Application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Clean Water Revolving Fund

## **PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Resolution Approving the Strategic Plan for the Albert Lea Public Library

Library Director Annice Sevet shared a PowerPoint overview of the library's three-year Strategic Plan for the years 2026–2028. She explained the process is facilitated by SELCO, the Regional Library System, which provides the service at no additional cost to its members. She described the planning process that took place throughout 2025, and the Library Advisory Board approved the plan on November 19, 2025.

- B. Ordinance Amending Section 50.0052 Conditional Uses (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)

Wayne Sorensen provided a brief overview of the ordinance amendment, highlighting that the most significant change allows a conditional use permit to be extended beyond the initial 12-month period, provided all conditions of the original permit remain unchanged.

- C. Resolution Approving Broadway Ridge Grant at 216 S. Broadway
- D. Resolution Approving Final Plat of Lutheran Third Subdivision

Sorensen explained that the existing property lines of the Luther Place Condominiums remain unaffected by this plat.

- E. Resolution Approving Land Surveyor's Certificate of Plat Correction – Blazing Star No. 2
- F. Resolution Authorizing City Manager to Dispose of Property Through Request for Proposal
- G. Resolution Authorizing Staff to Accept Donation of Property - 819 Garfield Ave.

At Councilor Christensen's request, Sorensen reported that the Ermina home, previously marked for demolition, has been sold, and the buyer intends to renovate it.

- H(1) Resolution Accepting Bid, Awarding Contract, and Approving Change Orders for Upper and Lower Remodeling of the City Center Building

Rigg pointed out that the agenda lays out four options for the council, along with an explanation of each one, and related financing options. Council exchanged views and relayed comments they've heard from constituents regarding the project.

- H(2) Resolution Accepting Bid, Awarding Contract, and Approving Change Orders for Lower Remodeling of the City Center Building; Amending 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan
- H(3) Resolution Amending 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan
- H(4) Resolution Amending 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan for Limited Preservation and Security

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

**CITY MANAGER REPORT**

**APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

- A. Resolution Approving Claims
  - (1) Presentation of Claims Over \$25,000

**ADJOURNMENT** – 6:52 p.m.

Dated this March 9, 2026

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Daphney Maras  
Council Secretary