



City of Neenah
Common Council Minutes
Wednesday, July 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Neenah City Hall – 211 Walnut Street
Council Chambers

[A broadcast of this meeting can be viewed and heard through this link on the City's YouTube channel.](#)

The Common Council of the City of Neenah, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, met in regular session at 6:00 PM, July 15, 2026, in the Council Chambers of Neenah City Hall.

Mayor Borchardt is the chair.

Present: Council President Steiner, Aldermen Erickson, Linski, Defferding, Pollnow, Ellis, and Weber. Alderman Bruno was excused. Staff present City Attorney Rashid, City Clerk Nagel, Director of Finance Rasmussen, Public Works Director Kaiser, and Director of Community Development & Assessment Nieforth.

Also Present: Fire Chief Teesch, Police Chief Olson, Human Resources Director Barber, Water Utility Director Mach, and those on the attached sign-in sheets.

Mayor Borchardt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

The City Clerk called a voice roll call as the Mayor/Aldermen recorded their attendance in the RollCall-Pro System followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Director Kaiser.

II. Proclamations

- A. Honoring 125 Years of Dedication, Charity, and Community of the Neenah-Menasha Elks Lodge #676. (Attachment)
- B. Honoring the Retirement of Gerry Kaiser after 35 Years of Employment with the City of Neenah. (Attachment)

Mayor Borchardt read the proclamations aloud, thanking Director Kaiser for his years of dedication, loyalty, and knowledge to the city.

Director Kaiser thanked his wife, his family, his team, and his leaders both past and present. Director Kaiser thanked the Mayor Borchardt and Council for the proclamation and the incredible honor of the Main Street overpass bridge named after him. Director Kaiser feels blessed to have worked for the city and looks forward to seeing great things happen in the future.

III. Introduction and Confirmation of Mayor's Appointment(s)

- A. None.

IV. Approval of Council Proceedings

- A. Approval of the of [July 1, 2026](#) Common Council meeting.

Motion by Alderman Neuman, seconded by Alderman Weber to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 8-0.

V. Public Forum

Speakers should give their name and residential address (not mailing address) and are allowed five minutes to speak on any topic.

Mayor Borchardt opened the public forum.

- A. Richard Kohls, 1015 Gillingham Road. Addressed Council regarding a violation notice he received from the city for a windscreen on his chain-link fence. Mr. Kohls received the notice from the building inspector that said he must remove the screening as it was against the ordinance. Mr. Kohls pointed out that there are many of these screens used in the many baseball diamonds in city parks. He is requesting help to rectify the situation.
- B. Scott Becher, 1061 Green Acres Lane, Neenah. Mr. Becher suggested renaming Island Park after Theda Clark, highlighting her contributions to the community.
- C. Cari Lendrum, 419 11th Street. Shared a card with Gerry Kaiser, expressing her gratitude and support in all his future endeavors.

After additional calls for public comments, none were heard. Mayor Borchardt closed the Public Forum.

VI. Mayor/Council consideration of public forum issues

- A. Alderman Ellis addressed Mr. and Mrs. Kohl sharing a story of issues with his own fence, of which, was on a corner lot. He expressed his support for the request to have an extension granted, noting the city's strict fence ordinance.
- B. Alderman Defferding concurred with Alderman Ellis and that he hopes the fence ordinance is reviewed and updated.
- C. Council President Steiner would like to have additional background as to how he received the notice and what makes the screening go against the ordinance. Director Nieforth advised fencing materials are prohibited. Depending on where the fence is located, if there are vision problems for vehicle drivers to see around the fence. Director Nieforth does not know the history of the situation but is willing to look into it.
- D. Alderman Erickson would like to know, if the screening has been in place for the last four years, why now? Director Nieforth does not know if this notice was complaint based or if the inspector stumbled upon the screening. She will need to look into the situation.
- E. Mayor Borchardt reminded everyone of the survey that is on the Community Development webpage regarding zoning. Taking the survey could help with this issue.
- F. Alderman Pollnow advised there will be a joint Common Council and Plan Commission Meeting on September 2nd at 4:00 PM in Council Chambers talking about the zoning code.

VII. Consent Agenda

- A. None.

VIII. Reports of standing committees

- A. Public Services & Safety Committee meeting of [July 7, 2026](#): (Chairman Weber/Vice Chairman Pollnow) (Minutes can be found on the City website)
 - 1. Meeting cancelled, no report.

- B. Finance & Personnel Committee meeting of [July 6, 2026](#): (Chairman Erickson/Vice Chairman Ellis) (Minutes can be found on the City website)
1. Meeting cancelled, no report.

- C. Special Finance and Personnel Committee meeting of [July 15, 2026](#): (Chairman Erickson)

1. Consider Committee recommendation to approve the hiring of Mark Rohloff of McMahon & Associates, LLC., as Interim Public Works Director on a part-time 20-hours per week basis at a rate of \$185/hour, not to exceed \$20,000, or until a permanent director is hired, with funding from the Public Works operating budget.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Neuman to approve the hiring of Mark Rohloff of McMahon & Associates, LLC., as Interim Public Works Director on a part-time 20-hours per week basis at a rate of \$185/hour, not to exceed \$19,500 per month, or until a permanent director is hired, with funding from the Public Works operating budget. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.

Mayor Borchardt explained that the motion was clarified and passed by the Finance and Personnel Committee of not to exceed \$19,500 per month which was the contract submitted to the city by McMahon & Associates. Mayor Borchardt further clarified that the contract included a not to exceed dollar amount was added as McMahon & Associates typically charge for travel and other related expenses, which is not the case here. Innovated Public Advisors (IPA) has been contracted to recruit for the Public Works Director position. IPA was used for the Strategic Plan as well as the Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue study. Tweaks have been made with the job description in hopes of attracting additional applicants.

IX. Reports of special committees and liaisons and various special projects committees

- A. Regular Plan Commission Meeting of [July 7, 2026](#): (Council Rep Neuman) (Minutes can be found on the City website)
1. Informational items only, no report.

X. Reports of Special Committees and Liaisons and Various Special Projects Committees

- A. Plan Commission meeting of [June 23, 2026](#): (Ald. Neuman) (Minutes can be found on the City website)
1. Informational only items, no report.

- B. Board of Public Works meeting of [July 15, 2026](#): (Vice Chairman Ellis) (Minutes can be found on the City website)

1. Consider Board recommendation to approve Final Pay Request, Contract 4-25, Concrete Pavement and Sidewalk Repair, Al Dix Concrete, Kaukauna, in the amount of \$236,365.40. (Attachment). **(Roll Call Vote)**

Motion by Ellis, seconded by Linski to approve the Final Pay Request, Contract 4-25, Concrete Pavement and Sidewalk Repair, Al Dix Concrete, Kaukauna, in the amount of \$236,365.40. Motion carries in a roll call vote, 8-0.

- C. Report from the Library Board Meeting of [July 15, 2026](#) – Alderman Erickson
 - 1. June statistics were given.
 - 2. Neenah Library has partnered with the Neenah-Menasha Boys and Girls Club for regular library visits for participant to check out books.
 - 3. The library is very busy with the summer reading program.
- D. Report from the Neenah Arts Council Meeting of [July 8, 2026](#) – Alderman Erickson
 - 1. Participated in the Farmer's Market on June 27th.
 - 2. Participated in the Community Fest on July 4th.
 - 3. Will be Neenah Night Out on Tuesday, August 4th.
 - 4. Will be at National Light House Day at Kimberly Point Park on August 7th.
- XI. Presentation of petitions
 - A. Any other petition received by the City Clerk's Office after distribution of the agenda.
 - 1. None.
- XII. Council Directives
 - A. Presentation by City Attorney Rashid on Understanding Council Directives.
City Attorney Rashid gave his presentation and answered any questions of the Council. A copy of the presentation is included with the minutes.
- XIII. Unfinished Business
 - A. None.
- XIV. New Business
 - A. Any announcements/questions that may legally come before the Council.
 - 1. None.
- XV. Closed Session.
 - A. The Common Council may convene in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(b) to consider an employee separation agreement. (Roll Call Vote)
(Roll Call Vote)
Motion by Alderman Pollnow, seconded by Alderman Weber for the Common Council may convene into closed session pursuant to the Common Council may convene in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(b) to consider an employee separation agreement. The Common Council may reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(2) to consider or act on any item (s) discussed in closed session. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 8-0.

After a short break, Council convened into closed session at 6:53 PM.
 - B. The Common Council may reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(2) to consider or act on any item (s) discussed in closed session. **(Voice Vote)**
Motion by Pollnow, seconded by Defferding for The Common Council may reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(2) to consider or act on any item (s) discussed in closed session. Motion carried in voice vote, 8-0.

No action was taken by Council in reference to the closed session item.

XVI. Adjournment

Motion by Alderman Erickson, seconded by Alderman Linski to adjourn. Motion carried in a voice vote 8-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlotte K. Nagel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlotte Nagel, City Clerk

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Attendance Sheet

NAME	ADDRESS
1. SCOTT DECHON	1061 GREEN ACRES CANY
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NAME	ADDRESS
1. Richard J Kohls	1015 Gillingham Rd
2. Christine Kohls	11
3. Frank Cuthbert	1533 Fallow Dr
4. ANTHONY L. MACH	773 YORKSHIRE RD.
5. Kevin Prost	
6. Connie Yang	
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City of Neenah – Common Council Meeting
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Attendance Sheet

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Council Directives 101

Branches of Local Government

- **Legislative:** Enactment of legislation (e.g. adopting budget, ordinances, make policy, determine what services the city will provide, enacting land use regulations). This branch is the Common Council's realm of authority.
- **Executive:** Directing staff, developing details relating to delivery of services, decision making relating to matters where legislation is silent as to details. This branch is the Mayor's realm of authority. The Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer (by statute & in practice) of the city - in charge of staff & oversight of its operations.
- **Administrative:** The day-to-day operations. The employees who carry out the legislation under the Executive's (Mayor's) direction and guidance. This is the Department Heads' and their staffs' realm of responsibility – the boots on the ground.



Summary – Policy vs Administrative & Operations



- Green Bay Packers have a *Board of Directors* (i.e. **Legislative** Branch, Council) Win the Super Bowl, bring the Lombardi trophy back to Title Town.
- They have a *Coaching Staff* (i.e. **Executive** Branch, Mayor) The Coaching Staff develop plays, write the play book, choose the players, train the players. This is a collaborative partnership between the head coach (Mayor) and subject matter experts (Department Heads)
- They have *Players* (i.e. **Administrative** Branch, Department Heads and staff) The players play the game as directed by their coaches - boots on the ground.
- You don't see the Board of Directors on the sidelines calling plays, nor are they playing the game!

What is a Council Directive (Defined)?

Per the Council Rules adopted January 6, 2026:

Council Directives are instructions issued by the Council directing a specific task such as developing plans for the city, establishing and/or modifying municipal programs, the development and/or the changing of policies of the city, or the undertaking by Department Heads or other staff of significant research on a topic or matter.



What a Council Directive Is (Described)

- **Policy Guidance:** It is intended to provide direction on policy decisions made by the Council that may require follow-through or implementation (e.g. DORA in the downtown).
- **Formal Instructions:** Used to direct actions, initiatives, or the prioritization of tasks aligned with the city's legislative aims (e.g. culture initiative).
- **A Legislative Tool:** Council directives can guide the departments, through the mayor, promoting citywide alignment with council-approved policies (e.g. wheel tax).
- **Visibility and Accountability:** They can foster understanding of the reasoning behind actions taken by the administration (e.g. Arrowhead, sidewalks, or Flock cameras).

Policy Guidance Example

Directive: "The City Council directs the staff, through the Mayor's office, to prioritize the development of affordable housing units in the downtown district as part of the upcoming fiscal year's urban renewal project".

The council may issue a directive, overseen by the mayor, to prioritize affordable housing projects in certain neighborhoods. This provides guidance to the department on the council's legislative priorities, without encroaching on the mayor's administrative discretion.

Formal Instruction Example

Directive: "The Council directs staff, through the Mayor's office, to submit a report within 30 days detailing the reasons for delays in the Water Treatment Facility project and outlining a revised timeline."

If there's been a delay in a city project, the council may issue a directive asking the mayor to secure a detailed report on the status and causes for the delay. This promotes council's having more formal, written updates on important, strategic projects.

Legislative Tool Example

Directive: "The Council directs the Department of Public Works, in coordination with the Mayor's office, to implement the new EV charging station policy approved by the council in the last meeting, ensuring the installation of 50 new stations by the end of the year."

A directive may be issued to ensure that a city's new law regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations is carried out by the appropriate, responsible departments.

When should a Council Directive be used?

- **Clear Policy Implementation**
 - **Special Initiatives**
- **Foster Understanding of Expectations**
 - **Advisory Role in Special Cases**

What a Council Directive Is Not

- **Not an Ordinance or Resolution:** While ordinances and resolutions have legal binding authority and can create laws or authorize “one-time” actions, council directives are more advisory in nature and typically do not have the same force as a law.
- **Not a Micro-management Tool:** It’s not meant to involve the council in day-to-day instruction or allow micromanagement of city operations. It should respect the independence of the mayor’s office (i.e. separation of powers) and administrative staff (i.e. subject matter expertise)
- **Not a Substitute for Budget Approval:** It cannot allocate funding, reallocate resources, or directly adjust the city’s budget. That falls under the purview of budget resolutions and ordinances (Statutorily prescribed, subject to public hearings).

When should a Council Directive NOT be used?

Policy Areas Exclusively within the Mayor's Authority

Routine Operational Decisions

Formal Legislation Functions (Ordinances/Resolutions)

Budgeting and Financial Allocations

Examples of what a Council Directive Is Not

1. **Passing a Noise Ordinance-** If the council wants to create a new law limiting construction noise after 10 PM, that must be done through an ordinance, not a directive.
2. **Hiring or Firing a Department Head-** Directives cannot be used to tell the mayor to terminate an employee or appoint a specific person. Staffing is an administrative function, overseen by the mayor, not a legislative directive.
3. **Approving the City Budget-** Directives cannot allocate money for a project. If the council wants to fund a park renovation, that requires a budget vote or resolution, not a directive.
4. **Deciding Which Roads Get Plowed (or Paved) First-** That's a day-to-day operational matter handled by public works, not something to be controlled via a directive.
5. **Changing the Zoning Code -** A zoning change is a legislative act requiring a formal ordinance process (including public hearings), not a directive.
6. **Mandating How Many Police Officers Patrol on a Friday Night-** That's micromanagement of police operations and outside the proper scope of a directive.

The Process of Issuing a Council Directive

1. **Identify the Need-** A council member recognizes an issue, policy gap, or concern that requires formal direction to the mayor.
2. **Draft the Directive-** Include **purpose, specific actions, timetable** and **reporting expectations**.
3. **Place on the agenda for next meeting.**
4. **Full Council Consideration by moving it to the floor with a second, at 1st Meeting.**
5. **Vote, at 2nd Meeting.**
6. **Communication to the Mayor/Staff.**
7. **Follow-Up and Monitoring**

The Prudent or Wise Use of the Process

Ask...

1. **Is it Necessary**- A council member may get what they need through less formal means.
2. **Is someone “already on it”**- Perhaps a call or e-mail to the Mayor or a staffer may reveal that.
3. **Is it overused** – Responding to directives takes time- and may take time away from other, important tasks (i.e. competition for limited resources of time & manpower).

Related (New) Process for COMMITTEES

Announcements and Future Agenda Items

- If the item/request is merely an update to an activity already in process, it will be added to the "Activity Report" for follow up in the next meeting(s).
 - Key points -
 - To accomplish this, we will need to tweak the existing "Public Works.....Activity Report" to include any item under purview of the PSSC. I will work with Lisa on this as we trial it.
 - Committee members will need to be patient and not expect an update/deep dive discussion on every item on the report each meeting (be practical in what needs updating).
 - The PSSC Chair has the final decision on whether the request is merely an update or needs to go through the process outlined next.

Related (New) Process for COMMITTEES

Announcements and Future Agenda Items (Con't)

- If the item/request is something that requires work/action on behalf of the appropriate Department Head/Staff, we will follow a "vote" process to determine the priority of the Committee
 - The requestor will make a formal motion outlining the request.
 - A 2nd needs to be made by another Committee member - otherwise the request will end there.
 - The Committee members will vote similar to any regular motion, and the request will only move forward if a majority of the PSSC votes in favor.
 - The notes of this will be captured in the minutes.
 - The request will then be discussed between the Mayor and respective Department Head for priority, and in the next PSSC mtg the request timeframe will be updated to the committee.
 - Once in action, the topic will become part of the "Activity Report" for future updates.

Related (New) Process for COMMITTEES

Announcements and Future Agenda Items (Con't)

- The "Activity Report" will in effect become what we desired as an open items list.

The Mayor, Committee chair & staff believe this process will help bring some structure around the committee/commission level requests and help ensure the Committee keeps things in front of the aldermen - while still balancing priorities of the Mayor & staff.

Questions & Comments?

References

International City/County Management Association (ICMA). ICMA frequently publishes guidelines and best practices for municipal government operations, including resources on how councils and mayors should interact, which could include insights into council directives.

ICMA's website: www.icma.org

National League of Cities (NLC). The NLC offers a variety of resources on municipal governance, including tools for understanding council powers, ordinances, and directives in the context of city operations. NLC's website: www.nlc.org

The Municipality (League of Wisconsin Municipalities magazine) "Roles and Authority of Governing Body Members", by: Maria Davis & Claire Silverman; June 2019 issue, pp 18-21 website: <https://www.lwm-info.org/828/The-Municipality-Magazine>

