

CITY OF WACONIA
AUGUST 3, 2026

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Litfin called the August 3, 2026, Waconia City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with all Council Members present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Litfin led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PROCLAMATIONS

None.

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Mayor Litfin stated that Agenda Item 7 *2026 State of the Library*, be removed from the agenda and rescheduled.

Motion to adopt the agenda with the removal of Item #7 was made by Council Member Siddons, seconded by Council Member Coleman.

MOTION CARRIED.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

6. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Litfin provided all the instructions for Open Forum.

Matt Steen, Carver County Sheriff Candidate, introduced himself to the Council stating he is a one-term candidate. He is a US army National Guard veteran with a rank of sergeant, with over 29 years in law enforcement. He has held a supervisory position for 17 years and one term in political office. He will staff aggressively for full deputy levels for faster response times. Prioritize officer wellness, which supports the men and women who protect us. He will further training, making the City's sheriff's office the best trained in Minnesota and is true community oriented policing (COP) building trust and relationships in every neighborhood. He will also be sure every deputy is on a first-name basis with every business owner in Waconia.

Theresa Green, 1547 Sparrow Road, a parent and a resident of Waconia for 25 years, spoke

in opposition to the proposed Cannabis Dispensary Ordinance Amendment. Ms. Green stated that the decision made by the Council would affect the entire Waconia community and requested that the Council deny the amendment. Ms. Green expressed the following. Normalization of Cannabis Use. She stated that the physical presence of a retail dispensary would normalize cannabis use for children and lower their perception of the risks associated with the drug. She expressed concern about the proposed J. Carver location because it is located along the main highway and across from the high school, with middle and high school students regularly traveling by bus, bicycle, and on foot. Increased Underage Access. Ms. Green expressed concern that customers may immediately smoke or vape cannabis in parking lots and nearby parks, creating potential problems around the high school and other community areas. Odor. She stated that cannabis dispensaries can produce strong odors that may extend into nearby residential and school areas. Ms. Green noted that her child has asthma and breathing issues and expressed concern about children being exposed to cannabis odors while participating in outdoor activities and sports. Impact on Housing. Ms. Green stated that cannabis dispensaries could negatively affect property values, increase neighborhood concerns, and create resistance among prospective home buyers.

Ms. Green concluded by stating that she believes cannabis use is harmful regardless of how it is presented and encouraged the Council to consider the well-being of children and the legacy being left for the Waconia community. She requested that the Council deny the proposed Ordinance Amendment.

Tom Casey, 200 Olive Street South, The Crossing Apartments. Provided the Council with a petition with 45 signatures requesting the installation of a 4-way stop sign at the intersection of Olive Street and 2nd Street. Mr. Casey believes this is not a safe intersection as signage now allows vehicles to park too close to the corner on three sides, which prevents east or westbound traffic proper visual ability before crossing. Very often large vehicles are parked on the corner and impossible to see around. If one or more lengths of cars were removed, it would provide a clearer view of oncoming traffic. This should be corrected before the new restaurant opens in the Wilford Apartment Building or someone gets hurt.

Jessica Hess, 2520 Spinnaker Road, representing Thrivent Bank, requested that the Council waive the Special Event Permit fee for Thrivent Bank's third annual Back-to-School Jamboree. The event is free and open to the public, with vendors providing free ice cream, a bounce house, face painting, and other activities. Ms. Hess stated that last year's event raised between \$1,000 and \$2,000, which was donated to Backyard Charities, an organization affiliated with the school district. She clarified that the requested fee waiver is not event-dependent.

Judd Kirckland, 1905 Charleston, appeared before the Council regarding a deck permit application originally submitted in 2024 and concerns regarding incorrect permit fees. Mr. Kirkland stated that he submitted a deck permit application in 2024 and believed the fees assessed were incorrect, specifically questioning the project valuation, state surcharge, plan review fee, and resulting total permit cost. He contacted the Building Department and

inspector numerous times to express his concerns and requested that the calculations be reviewed. Because he believed the fees were incorrect, he did not pay the permit fees. In 2025, Mr. Kirkland again attempted to resolve the 2024 permit issue but was informed that the 2024 permit had expired and that he would need to submit a new application. He submitted a new deck permit application. When he went to pick up the 2025 permit, he was informed that the 2024 plan review fee would need to be paid before the new permit could be issued. Mr. Kirkland objected to this requirement, stating that the underlying issue was that the 2024 fees had been calculated incorrectly. He stated that this has now been confirmed by the Building Official. On July 30, the Building Official told Mr. Kirkland that, after reviewing the 2024 application, the fees had indeed been calculated incorrectly.

Mr. Kirkland emphasized that he is not refusing to pay a valid fee but is objecting to being charged for a plan review based on incorrect calculations that he brought to the City's attention in 2024 and that were not corrected until later. He stated that if the 2024 fees had been calculated correctly, he would have paid them at that time and completed the project. Mr. Kirkland requested that the Council direct staff to waive the 2024 plan review fee because it was based on an acknowledged error.

7. COMMUNITY INTEREST PRESENTATIONS

8. ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

- 1) Approve the July 20, 2026, Council Minutes**
- 2) Approve Aug 3, 2026 Expenditures**
- 3) Downtown Reconstruction Phase 4 Pay Request #3 to GMH Asphalt Corporation**
- 4) Approve the Limit Use Permit for TH5 and TH 284**
- 5) Approve JPA with Carver County for CSAH 10 Improvements**
- 6) CONT. - Ordinance Amendment Related to Retail Cannabis Buffers**
- 7) Hiring of Probationary Firefighters**
- 8) Street Banner Pole Use Policy**
- 9) Facade Improvement Grant - 138 1st Street West**
- 10) Special Event Permit - Thrivent Back to School Jamboree**
- 11) Temporary On-Sale Liquor License**

Mayor Littin requested to pull Consent Agenda Item 8.6 *CONT. - Ordinance Amendment Related to Retail Cannabis Buffers* and Consent Agenda Item 8.10 *Special Event Permit — Thrivent Back to School Jamboree*.

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as published with the pulling of Item 8.6 and Consent Agenda Item 8.10 was made by Council Member Coleman and seconded by Council Member Grengs.

MOTION CARRIED.

9. COUNCIL BUSINESS

1) 8th Street Parking Restrictions Request

Shane Fineran, City Administrator, stated that this was a discussion and direction item for the Council. The Council received a request from Lauren Dobratz of Three Bears Play Den to consider modifying or moving parking restrictions on portions of 8th Street near the business, located at 80 8th Street East. The business is located within a new multi-tenant industrial warehouse development. Mr. Fineran explained that the parking restrictions on 8th Street were established in 2021. The street is approximately 34 feet wide. While the Municipal Code allows parking on both sides of a 30-foot wide street, this configuration is more typical in residential areas and may not be appropriate for a business park with higher traffic volumes and large vehicle movements. This section of 8th Street also does not have pedestrian facilities or sidewalks.

Lauren Dobratz and Nick Dobratz, 80 8th Street and 1850 Sandbar Circle. They stated that the business has received an overwhelming positive response and has become a destination in Waconia. They are considering expanding the indoor playground and are exploring creative options to accommodate additional parking, particularly on weekends. They noted that the business currently has 35 parking stalls and that parking is adequate at this time but could become more challenging with future expansion. One option they suggested was allowing parking on 8th Street on weekends.

Lane Braaten, stated that staff had not received a plan for rearranging the existing parking stalls.

Mr. Fineran stated that a sidewalk is planned for 8th Street when the vacant lot is developed; however, there is currently no timeline for the development of the property.

Mayor Litfin stated that he would consider allowing weekend parking on one side of 8th Street as a possible option.

Council directed the applicants to work on a shared parking agreement and explore rearranging the existing park stalls. Council will revisit the parking restriction after the applicants have further developed these options.

2) Authorize Award of Contract for Water Treatment Plant No. 4 Construction

Jon Haukaas, Public Services Director, provided an update on the Water Treatment Plant No 4 Project. The City secured the property on Little Avenue and completed the design work for the site. On June 1, 2026, staff received authorization to advertise for bids. The City's Capital Improvement Plan also includes a campus improvement/relocation of Public Services, which was included as an alternate to the project. The bid was advertised with an alternate for construction of a 20,000-square-

foot cold storage building. The apparent low bid was Magney Construction with a bid of \$24,379.543, including the cold storage facility to be constructed directly adjacent to the Water Treatment Plant.

Council Member Gleason questioned the 10% contingency included in the project, stating that the plans and specifications were clear and concise and questioning whether the contingency could be reduced. Shane Fineran, explained that a 10% contingency was also used for the New Fire Station project.

Kevin Young, Project Manager with Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH) explained the number and locations of the soil boring conducted for the project. He noted that the area on the plant side presents great risk and was a consideration in establishing the contingency amount.

Lane Braaten stated that no building permits had been submitted at this time.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-187 authorizing the award of a construction contract for the Water Treatment Plant No. 4 and Cold Storage Building Construction Project was made by Council Member Gleason and seconded by Council Member Grengs.

MOTION CARRIED.

3) Permit Fee Appeal Deck Permit for 1905 Charleston Lane

Lane Braaten provided a history of the agenda item. As detailed in the Council packet, when staff initially reviewed the deck permit, the permit subsequently expired. Mr. Braaten explained that all permit applications include an explanation of the requirement to pay plan review fees, which are based on the valuation of the project and account for staff time and materials associated with the review.

Mr. Braaten stated that Mr. Kirkland was correct that the Building Official, as part of the due diligence process, reviewed the 2024 and 21025 permits and the updated plan review fee. The Building Official reviewed the 2024 building permit valuation, reevaluated the square footage, and determined that the calculation was incorrect. The 2024 plan review fee should have been \$307.59 rather than the \$330.23. This information was provided to Mr. Kirkland. Mr. Braaten explained that the City has traditionally held permits until applicable fees are paid. Staff does not have the authority to waive permit fees; therefore, the request was brought before the Council for consideration of waiving the outstanding fee.

Council revised the breakdown of the permit fees.

Judd Kirland stated that he obtained the deck permit in 2024 and immediately questioned the permit fee after speaking with two building inspectors from MetroWest and the Building Department. Mr. Kirkland stated that he believes he has been more than fair regarding the cost of the deck project. He questioned reviews of the permit fees in both 2024 and 2025 and expressed concern that the fees for the two permits

were identical even though the decks were different sizes. Mr. Kirkland stated that the deck was a four-day project and the permit fees have been an issue since 2024. He expressed concern that not only was the plan review fee incorrect, but that the overall fee calculations were incorrect. Mr. Kirkland stated that he believed the fair permit fee would be based on the 2025 permit review fee, with the 2024 portion and the plan review fee for the changes reflected in the 2025 permit.

Motion to remove the outstanding balance of \$307.59 for the 2024 deck permit fee and direct staff to move forward with the 2025 permit fee of \$852.90. The total cost was made by Council Member Gleason seconded by Council Member Siddons.

MOTION CARRIED.

10. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Litfin pulled this item for further discussion.

Lane Bratten reviewed the agenda item stating that Charles Levin submitted an ordinance amendment related to cannabis buffer requirements. The Planning Commission recommended denial of the request. On June 15 and July 20, 2026, the Council reviewed the proposed ordinance amendment and directed staff to bring forward formal changes discussed by Council. The proposed amendments included reducing certain buffer requirements, allowing micro and mezzo businesses with a retail component as a conditional use in the B-1 District, and allowing micro and mezzo businesses with a retail component in the industrial Park District, provided they meet the applicable buffer requirements.

The proposed buffer changes included measuring the 1,000-foot school buffer from structure to structure rather than from property line to property line, maintaining the 1,000-foot distance while changing the method of measurement. The proposed change also reduced the 500-foot buffer from parks to 250 feet, measured from the park property boundary.

Shane Fineran stated that state law requires municipalities to make cannabis retail registrations available with one retail registration available for every 12,500 residents. Under state statute, the City is required to issue two cannabis retail registrations, and the City has capped the total number of registrations at two by ordinance. Mr Fineran also noted that the Minnesota Clean indoor Air Act prohibits smoking in public spaces. A mezzo or micro business is considered a conditional use and one of the conditions addresses odor, requiring that the facility not produce noxious or nuisance-causing odors, subject to applicable conditions.

Charles Levin, 8420 County Road 10 East spoke regarding the application and described measures that would be taken to mitigate and control odors associates with the business.

Mayor Litfin stated that City staff, the Planning Commission, and Council have respectfully worked with the applicant regarding the potential purchase of property at 1320

Mill Lane for use as a cannabis business, while also considering public comments received. Mayor Liitfin stated that he is opposed to marijuana use. However, the State of Minnesota has made edible and smokable cannabis products legal. The Mayor asked Mr. Levin how the business would prevent sales to minors. Mr. Levin stated that the business would operate similarly to a liquor store, with age verification required for anyone entering the business and strict security measures around the property. He stated that 90 days of security footage storage is required and that all points of access would require a FOB or card reader. Cameras would monitor all areas of activity within the facility. Mr. Levin stated that the THC content would vary depending on the products offered and estimated the business could potentially create 7-20 new jobs.

Edward Green, 1547 Sparrow Road, emailed the Council earlier in the day requesting that the City not amend its ordinance to allow a retail cannabis location at J. Carver Distillery, stating that the proposed location does not meet the requirements he believes are appropriate for the community.

Motion to Adopt Ordinance No. 794 amending Section 900.05.7, Section 900.05.11, Section 900.05.12, Section 900.06.1.D, and Section 900.11 was made by Council Member Coleman, seconded by County Member Grengs.

MOTION CARRIED.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-192 approving the summary publication of Ordinance No. 794 was made by Council Member Coleman, seconded by Council Member Siddons.

MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Litfin pulled this consent agenda item for further discussion.

The Mayor stated that earlier in the meeting, Jessica Hess, representing Thrivent Bank, is requesting to waive the Special Event Permit Fee.

Mr. Fineran reviewed the Special Event Permit Fee, which was increased earlier this year to \$350, which includes staff time, notifications, mailings, etc. which are hard costs to the City. If public parking is impacted either on the street or in a municipal parking lot, there is a per stall fee of \$1. This event utilizes the downtown parking lot and would have an additional dollar amount impacting approximately 25 parking stalls for the event.

Motion to revise Resolution NO. 2026-185 with Thrivent Bank paying the Special Event Permit Fee of \$350 and waiving the additional parking stall fees.

MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-185 approving the Special Event Permit for Thrivent Bank was made by Council Member Gleason, seconded by Council Member Coleman.

MOTION CARRIED BY A 4-1 VOTE WITH MAYOR LITFIN OPPOSING

11. STAFF REPORTS

12. BOARD REPORTS

1) Staff Reports

Joel Merry the new finance director welcome to the City of Waconia. Ncile started in 2005 and and grew finance director in 2011. Almost 22 years.
Nicle thanked the Council as front desk at Safari Island.

a. Road Construction Updates - Jon Haukaas

Jon Haukaas, Public Services Director, updated the Council on Oak Avenue and Sparrow Road Closure and Detour. The detour is due to culvert replacements on Oak Avenue. This detour will close off portions of Sparrow Road and Oak Avenue for approximately two weeks. The goal being completion before school begins.

The Little Avenue detour began last Thursday. The northern piece of Little Avenue is being realigned.

There is a Joint Power Agreement approved at this meeting for the County Road 10 Median Construction. The county is doing sections of County Road 10. The segment in Waconia will include medianwork from Highway 5 out to Summerwood Road.
This is a 6–8 week project and there will be traffic delays.

2) Councilmember Siddons

Nothing to report.

3) Councilmember Coleman

Nothing to report.

4) Councilmember Gleason

Nothing to report.

5) Councilmember Grengs

Nothing to report.

6) Mayor Litfin

Mayor's Report for 8-3-26:

July 21 met with department heads and Council Member Grengs for the City's capital budget meeting. This important meeting and conversation is where the city's large budget items are discussed for 2027.

July 22 met with Superintendent Brian Gersich and Shane Fineran. We meet regularly each year to discuss common city/school district needs.

August 6 at 3pm is the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new collaboratively funded pedestrian and recreational trail on the west side of Waconia along County Road 10. This trail was a unique partnership with Carver County, the DNR, and the City of Waconia. The trail has been very busy already in its first month and it is a fantastic addition to Waconia and to this region. The new trail will reduce the gaps in our trail system. Thanks again to our partners at Carver County and at the DNR for supporting this need in Carver County and in Waconia.

Also, the Carver County Fair starts next week in Waconia.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Shane Fineran welcomed the new Finance Director, Joel Merry.
- Recognized Nicole Meyer, who is the departing Finance Director. Nicole started with the City in 2005 at Safari Island and quickly advanced to Finance Director in 2011.
- Jackie Schulze reminded all of National Night out at City Square Park. The City is partnering with Gather and Grow Food Shelf. There will be six food trucks and all attending will receive a \$10 food ticket. The Fire Department will have a pop-up splash pad, face painting, music by Power of 10 and much more family fun.
- On August 11, 2026, is the Primary Election with the polls open from 7 am to 8 pm. Early voting is open at City Hall during normal business hours as well as on Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm.
- Justin Sorenson, Fire Chief. Three individual neighborhoods have reached out to the Fire Department requesting visits from the Fire Department for National Night Out.

14. ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

Motion to adjourn the August 3, 2026, City Council meeting at 7:45 p.m. was made by Council Member Gleason, seconded by Council Member Coleman.

MOTION CARRIED.

WORK SESSION: COUNCIL OPEN FORUM

UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Tim Litfin, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Sue Schwalbe, Administrative Specialist

