

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL RETREAT MINUTES

August 26, 2025

Mayor Florea called the August 26, 2025 Leavenworth City Council Annual Retreat meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

ROLL CALL

Council Present: Mayor Carl J. Florea, Sharon Waters, Clint Strand, Anne Hessburg, Zeke Reister, Shane Thayer and Mike Bedard.

Council Absent: Travis McMaster.

Staff Present: Matthew "Selby", Chantell Steiner, Maggie Boles, Andi Zontek-Backstrum and Andrea Fischer.

City Administrator Selby explained that while they typically hold a day-long retreat annually, scheduling difficulties led to this shortened evening session during a time when the regular council meeting would have been cancelled.

Selby noted that ideally, the City would have a comprehensive plan, a strategic plan and various capital improvement plans, with goals based on these plans. He mentioned that the updated Comprehensive Plan will be completed by June 2026, followed by a strategic planning process. Rather than waiting three years to revisit goals, he felt it was appropriate to review the goals established in 2016, which had not been revisited since 2020.

He introduced the facilitator Una McAlinden, whom he met at a Northwest Managers conference in Vancouver. McAlinden's background as an attorney from Northern Ireland and certified facilitator was highlighted, and Selby noted that she had spoken with most of the Councilmembers before the retreat to prepare.

Introduce the Revised Framework of Focus Areas

McAlinden facilitated introductions, asking each participant to state their name, role, how long they had been with the City, and one word summarizing how they felt about goal setting.

McAlinden clarified her role as guiding the process rather than offering content expertise, explaining that her job was to keep the conversation on track and on schedule to ensure a productive discussion.

She established two guidelines for the conversation: respect for one another, giving grace and assuming best intentions.

The group then reviewed the proposed enhanced framework for 2025, which reorganized the 2016 framework to address emerging challenges:

Council members noted several positive aspects of the revised framework:

- The inclusion of governance and regional collaboration to address intergovernmental relations
- More clearly addressing tourism management versus tourism growth

- Broadening infrastructure focus to include asset management
- Recognizing the need for balance between tourism and residents
- Addressing environmental concerns that weren't as prominent in 2016

Finance Director Chantell Steiner observed that the 2025 framework maintained all elements from 2016 but presented them in broader, less specific categories, noting that many 2016 accomplishments had already been achieved.

Discussion to Capture the Current Situation on Each of the Focus Areas

Focus Area 1: Community Sustainability and Growth Management

Focus Area 2: Infrastructure Investment and Asset Management

Focus Area 3: Governance and Regional Collaboration

Focus Area 4: Economic Resilience and Financial Strategy

The group began each focus area by examining the current situation of each focus area. They identified several strengths and initiatives already in place, gaps, opportunities and threats were identified. The group discussed the accomplishments that are underway and the success indicators the Council could put into place in the next 2-3 years.

Criteria for Prioritization

After discussing all four focus areas, the Council used a straw poll exercise to identify priorities. Councilmembers then articulated the values and criteria that guided their choices:

- Community benefit - caring for the community
- Sustainability - building and sustaining the community for decades to come
- Efficiency - projects that solve multiple challenges or problems
- Diversity of ideas focused on quality of life issues
- Initiatives that hold the community together
- Long-term investments that benefit everyone
- Pragmatic approaches balancing needs and wants

It was noted that five of six Councilmembers highlighted pool replacement as a priority, which was a shift from previous years.

Several Councilmembers expressed that infrastructure investment emerged as a clear priority, showing the Council's understanding of the need to address foundational issues before more visible community amenities.

Confirming Alignment & Coordination

The group discussed next steps, with Selby indicating that the information gathered now would be transcribed and documented for Council to review. Staff would use the Council's guidance on success indicators to develop a work plan.

Some concerns were raised about capacity and resources, including:

- The need to hire a grant writer sooner, especially if grant funds become less available.

- Full time person to manage the grants, with the City managing 16 grants currently, which is time consuming.
- Staff growth of over 30% in the past three years and concerns about sustainability.
- The potential impact of an economic downturn on revenue.
- Uncertainty about Federal funding, including a potential loss of \$942,000 earmarked for the Osborn project.
- The need to finalize utility rates for the next five years.

Councilmembers and staff shared their appreciation for the alignment within the Council that emerged during the discussion, they enjoyed the more comprehensive approach to goal setting and have optimism about moving forward with clear priorities. The recognition that the community was at the center of the priorities and the Council understood the importance of improving the City's infrastructure.

Adjournment

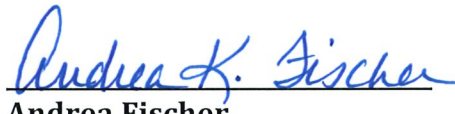
Seeing no other business, Mayor Florea adjourned the August 26, 2025 annual retreat meeting of the Leavenworth City Council. The meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM.

APPROVED



Carl J. Florea
Mayor

ATTEST



Andrea Fischer
City Clerk