

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

January 13, 2026

Mayor Florea called the January 13, 2026 Study Session to order at 5:33 PM.

Council Present: Mayor Carl J. Florea, Clint Strand, Anne Hessburg, Zeke Reister, Shane Thayer, Travis McMaster, Mike Bedard and Rob Eaton.

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

1. Chamber Report

Chamber of Commerce Director Troy Campbell presented updated information regarding the lodging tax budget and historical data. He noted that the Chamber had combined this information into a brief resource document for Councilmembers to reference when responding to constituent questions about how lodging tax is spent. He explained that the City, County and Chamber each pay one-third of key personnel costs.

He discussed the impact of the December weather event on tourism, sharing that footfall counts reached only around 68,000, comparable to a typical summer weekend day rather than the higher holiday numbers normally expected. He pointed out that retailers and restaurants suffered significant losses, including food waste and merchandise shrinkage. It was noted that this was the second time in four years that a devastating weather event had affected a holiday weekend.

Mr. Campbell outlined the Chamber's plans for the first quarter of 2026. For January, they would focus on promoting Winter Karnival events including ice carvers and fireworks. February would feature a "Love from Leavenworth" campaign including a shopping promotion and the return of the advent calendar coupled with advertising for the Leavenworth marketplace, which allows fans of the town to support local businesses through online shopping. March would switch to a restaurant appreciation month with "Freebies for Foodies" to drive business during a traditionally slow period. He emphasized ongoing efforts to communicate that most visitors could still reach Leavenworth despite highway closures.

He announced the grand opening of the new Welcome Center at 645 Front Street, scheduled for February 14th.

The Council asked questions and discussed the information that was presented.

2. Revisions to the City's Construction Standard Details

City Engineer Brantley Bain presented the proposed updates to the City's construction standard details, following up on the December 9, 2025 Council Study Session as requested by the Council.

He explained that over the past four years there have been many changes to standards and approaches when working with developers and contractors, with some updates addressing problematic issues observed in roadways and developments around town.

The specific changes to the document are:

- Fire hydrant assembly detail: The City is switching to Kennedy fire hydrants which use grease instead of expensive specialty oil, making them easier and more cost-effective to maintain.
- Residential driveway detail: Changed to prevent contractors from cutting into City streets. The revised standard shifted the connection point to avoid cutting into the street. This helps prevent substandard patches on City streets and adds clarification about the required \$10,000 bond for working in the right-of-way.
- Water service detail: A completely new drawing updating materials used when making water connections.
- Traffic control standards: Four new details developed by Mr. Bain to address safety concerns when contractors work on roadways, ensuring proper signage and traffic control measures.

The Council asked questions and discussed the information that was presented. After discussion about traffic control details, the Council requested modifications to figure TC-2 to add taper cones on both sides for improved worker safety.

3. Tree & Vegetation Management and Removal Policy

Public Works Director Andi Zontek-Backstrum presented a new Tree & Vegetation Management and Removal Policy, explaining that it was drafted to clarify various tree and vegetation scenarios the City has encountered over the years, including recent issues from the December 2025 storm. The policy combined code requirements written in simpler language for public understanding, along with procedural clarifications not directly covered in code.

The policy addresses the following key areas:

- Tree limb and vegetation management for items in the City right-of-way versus private property
- Standing tree removal processes for trees on City property versus private property
- Post-storm cleanup priorities

The Council asked questions and discussed the information that was presented. After discussion the Council provided direction on post-storm root ball management. They agreed that the City should remove root balls from trees that are tipped over in the right-of-way if they present a specific hazard, such as being in driveways or sidewalks or creating large holes, while stumps without specific hazards would generally be left in place. Director Zontek-Backstrum indicated she would update the policy based on this feedback.

4. WA Leavenworth Meadows Deed and Dedication & La Quinta Easement Dedication

City Attorney Tom Graafstra presented information about two dedication processes associated with private developments in the City: the WA Leavenworth Meadows (renamed Autumn Haus) dedication of the Autumn Strasse roadway, and the La Quinta utility easement dedication located off Ward Strasse and Zelt Strasse.

Regarding La Quinta, the action would be considered at the regular Council meeting later that evening. Mr. Graafstra explained that the package included subordination agreements

from mortgage holders confirming they would not foreclose on City easements if the property encountered financial troubles.

For the Leavenworth Meadows/Autumn Haus development, Mr. Graafstra and Director Zontek-Backstrum explained that Autumn Strasse currently remains private property with the developer responsible for maintenance until the dedication occurs. The developer will dedicate the entire roadway from Chumstick Highway to Titus Road, with a minimum 60-foot right-of-way plus additional space for retaining walls, slopes, and utilities. Councilmembers confirmed that the road must be usable for emergency access all the way through per the development agreement, though the developer is only required to complete their portion of the road.

The Council asked questions and discussed the information that was presented.

5. Call for Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore Committee Assignments

Mayor Florea reviewed committee assignments, noting that most Councilmembers were satisfied with their current assignments. Several changes were discussed to fill vacancies left by former Councilmember Waters. Councilmember Eaton would take the Downtown Steering Committee, Councilmember Hessburg would take Leavenworth Area Promotions (LAP), Councilmember Reister would take the Chelan County Solid Waste Council and Councilmember Bedard took the Mosquito District Board position. Mayor Florea noted that the Roundabout Committee would be established after the new Recreation and Tourism Manager is hired.

For the Council standing committees, Councilmember Hessburg, acting as Mayor Pro Tempore, initiated a conversation about potentially bringing back the Public Works and Parks Committee, which was discontinued three years ago when the Council expanded Study Sessions to twice a month. Councilmember Eaton advocated re-establishing this committee, suggesting it would provide more in-depth review of projects and upcoming public works and parks issues.

Administrator Selby provided historical context, explaining that the standing committees had been reduced to streamline Council time commitments and avoid redundant Council reports. Despite these concerns, the Council showed interest in trying a combined Public Works and Parks Committee, with scheduling to be determined based on committee member availability and staff schedules.

6. Call for Changes of Council Policy, Procedures and Rules

The Council briefly discussed potential changes to the Council Policy, Procedures and Rules document. No specific changes were proposed, but Councilmember Eaton suggested returning to the practice of indicating whether agenda items were on first, second or third reading to improve public transparency about how many times the Council had reviewed items before taking action. Staff clarified that they already follow a "three touch" policy, but those touches might include Friday email updates rather than formal readings at meetings.

7. Council Updates/Suggestions for Future Agenda Items

No Councilmembers offered updates or suggestions for future agenda items

Leavenworth Study Session Minutes
January 13, 2026

Study Session adjourned at 7:00 PM.

APPROVED

DocuSigned by:

A8B4411C12AB49D...
Carl Florea
Mayor

ATTEST

Signed by:

D5CBE4ADAE1B451...
Andrea Fischer
City Clerk