

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

March 24, 2026

Mayor Carl J. Florea called the March 24, 2026 Leavenworth City Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilmember Reister led the City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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, Brantley Bain and Andrea Fischer.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of February 24, 2026 Study Session Minutes
3. Approval of February 24, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
4. 2026 Claims EFT & Checks 71843-71907 = \$310,106.28
5. Mayoral Re-Appointment of:
 - a. Elizabeth Sall for Planning Commission Position No. 1 – Expires 4/2026
 - b. Colin Forsyth for Planning Commission Position No. 6 – Expires 4/2026
 - c. Alison Miller for Planning Commission Position No. 7 – Expires 4/2026
6. Set Public Hearing – Moratorium on Bed & Breakfast Conditional Use Permits on April 14, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

Councilmember Hessburg moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Thayer and passed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Florea opened the floor for public comments. No members of the public, either in person or online, provided comments.

7. Public Safety Reports: **CORPORAL RANDY LAKE, LIAISON OFFICER**

The Chelan County Sheriff's report was not presented as Corporal Lake was not able to attend the meeting.

DEPUTY CHIEF MIKE SMITH, FIRE DISTRICT #3

Chelan County Fire District 3 Deputy Chief Mike Smith provided the current fire report for the month of February 2026, including the calls for service that have taken place around the City of Leavenworth and surrounding areas, as well as the number of incidents and Fire

Marshal Services for February. He reported on other items of interest and answered questions from the Council.

8. Presentation: Our Valley Our Future – Rachel Evey, Executive Director

Rachel Evey, Executive Director of Our Valley Our Future (OVOF), presented alongside Development Facilitation Specialist Maggie Richter and board member Bob Bugert.

Mr. Bugert opened by sharing his perspective as a volunteer, noting that in his career as a retired biologist and administrator he had never encountered a community engagement process as broad and deep as OVOF's, and expressed pride in the organization's strengthened staff capacity.

Ms. Evey provided an overview of OVOF's mission as a nonpartisan, cross-sector organization serving Chelan and Douglas Counties. She outlined the organization's four main functions: leading community visioning every five years, creating an action plan shaped by thousands of residents, supporting partners with coordination, data, and communication and keeping the region focused on both present and future needs. She noted that in the last action planning cycle in 2021, Leavenworth achieved an 11% survey response rate, proportionate to its share of the regional population.

She described the current community visioning process, which is actively underway. Data is being collected through online and paper surveys, one-on-one stakeholder interviews and community listening sessions. A listening session specific to Leavenworth is being planned for an upcoming Saturday in May in partnership with NCW Libraries. The resulting action plan will cover 2027 to 2031.

Ms. Evey highlighted several active working groups: housing solutions (active since 2017), wildfire, post-carbon economy, early care and education, and health literacy. On housing, she noted that Leavenworth led the region in adopting pre-approved ADU plans, with Wenatchee and East Wenatchee now following suit. She announced that OVOF's annual housing summit will be held on June 11 in Leavenworth, organized around the "Five L's", land, labor, lending, laws and lumber. On wildfire, she noted the forthcoming launch of wildfirencw.org, a one-stop resource for residents and visitors covering mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. It represents collaboration of over 40 organizations. The post-carbon economy working group, she highlighted industrial symbiosis work including local CO₂ supply development, waste-to-heat applications at the water treatment plant and resource recovery partnerships. She noted that every dollar invested in early learning yields a \$16 return by the time children reach adulthood.

Ms. Evey shared a notable success story from a recent food access symposium, where a coincidental connection between a church community member and the executive director of Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council resulted in a 40,000-pound food donation. She emphasized that these harder-to-quantify outcomes are central to OVOF's value as a bridge-builder. She concluded by encouraging Councilmembers and the public to

participate in the community survey, open through April 30, and to attend upcoming events, including the June housing summit in Leavenworth.

RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDERS AND OTHER BUSINESS

9. Amendment No. 8 – Varela Engineering for the Commercial Street Lift Station Project

Councilmember Eaton moved to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign Amendment No. 8 for Varela Engineering to increase the budget for construction engineering and inspection services associated with the Commercial Street Lift Station project by \$140,000, bringing the not to exceed amount to \$3,719,241. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Strand and passed unanimously.

10. Commercial Street Lift Station Conditional Bid Award

Councilmember Bedard moved to accept the construction bid and authorize the Mayor to execute a contract with Strider Construction, Inc. for the Commercial Street Lift Station Project Phase II in the amount of \$2,851,781.70 including Washington State sales tax, contingent on the completion of right-of-way certification. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Thayer and passed unanimously.

11. Discussion: Six Month Moratorium on Bed & Breakfast Conditional Use Permits

Community Development Director Maggie Boles presented an overview of the current Bed & Breakfast (B&B) regulatory framework and the issues driving the moratorium discussion. Two primary concerns were identified: (1) the City's pre-approved Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) building plans, paid for with public funds, are being used to construct units that are subsequently being converted to B&Bs, undermining the City's affordable housing goals; and (2) the existing 4% housing stock cap on B&Bs is calculated using an unreliable methodology based on assessor code 11, which includes non-residential parcels and produces an inflated cap figure of 44 permitted B&Bs compared to a lower and more accurate count derived from census data. There are currently 31 B&Bs approved or in process within City limits, with two active applications pending.

Council discussion focused on the disconnect between the City's investment in affordable housing tools and the unintended consequence of those tools enabling short-term rental conversions. It was noted that the City of East Wenatchee and City of Wenatchee holds ownership of its pre-approved plans and contractually restricts their use to long-term housing, an approach Leavenworth did not negotiate when its plans were developed. Director Boles indicated that correcting the 4% cap calculation would require a formal code amendment through the Planning Commission. A six-month moratorium was identified as the appropriate mechanism to pause new applications while staff works through both the cap methodology and the pre-approved plan ownership and restriction issues. Councilmember Bedard recused himself from the vote due to financial interest.

Councilmember Hessburg moved to set a public hearing for a moratorium on Bed & Breakfast Conditional Use Permits for April 14, 2026 at 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Thayer and passed with a vote of 6-0-1 with Councilmember Bedard recused.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Councilmember Strand attended the Finance Committee meeting.

Councilmember Hessburg attended the Leavenworth Area Promotions (LAP) Committee meeting, the Link Transit Board meeting and the Parking Advisory Committee meeting.

Councilmember Reister attended the Finance Committee meeting and a mountain bike trail fundraiser at Icicle Brewing.

Councilmember Thayer attended meeting with several local business owners who expressed interest in forming committees to better communicate City information among themselves, which he characterized as a constructive development. He also attended the Parks & Recreation Service Area (PRSA) board meeting and observed Session 4 of the Civics Academy. He also volunteered at the Leavenworth Mountain Film Festival.

Councilmember McMaster attended the Leavenworth Area Promotions (LAP) Committee meeting, the Finance Committee meeting, the PRSA Board meeting and the Parking Advisory Committee meeting.

Councilmember Bedard attended a meeting with community members involved in online discussions about City issues, aimed at reducing adversarial dynamics, and the Downtown Steering Committee meeting.

Councilmember Eaton attended the Downtown Steering Committee meeting.

MAYOR/ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Mayor Florea had no report.

City Administrator Selby reported that staff met with Pat Hagerty of the Cascadia Conservation District about storm debris at the City cemetery. The Cascadia Conservation District has secured a \$50,000 industrial symbiosis grant from the Department of Commerce to convert storm debris into biochar and would like to include the cemetery debris in that project, potentially saving the City the cost of chipping and hauling it away. Another storm debris collection event is scheduled for April 11th from 8 AM to 2 PM to include in the potential biochar event.

He gave a commendation to City staff for their presentation at Session 4 of the Civics Academy – Public Works. He highlighted drone footage produced by Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Chris Klancke covering the City's intake-to-distribution infrastructure, and a tour of the Water Resource Recovery Facility led by Supervisor Kyle Breaux. The next Civics Academy session on public safety is on April 13th, and the final session "Parks, Pools, Parking and People" is April 27.

He announced two new hires starting on April 13th: Steven Rubinstein as Recreation & Tourism Manager and Alex Patek as Water Treatment Plant Operator. He noted over 60 applications are under review for the open permit technician position. The City is also accepting applications for an open Utility Maintenance position as well as a Seasonal Construction Manager.

He noted that he will be attending the Northwest Managers Conference in Sitka, Alaska, where he will present on a panel titled "Balancing Tourism Growth and Local Needs" alongside city managers from Sitka, Alaska, Kodiak Island, Alaska and Seaside, Oregon.

Finance Director Chantell Steiner informed the Council that the Finance Committee meetings in June and September have been moved due to schedule conflicts. She advised Council to expect a significant quarterly budget amendment at the next meeting, representing approximately \$8.5 million in rollovers from 2025 into 2026.

She also previewed an upcoming informational discussion on potential updates to the senior and disabled utility discount program thresholds, with the goal of completing outreach ahead of the summer billing season.

Community Development Director Maggie Boles noted multiple active planning projects, including an upcoming in-person hearing on the PUD substation scheduled for April 7th, and a resubmitted co-living application is currently in a three-week public comment period due to a noticing error. A B&B Conditional Use Permit application is beginning their comment period, and a Cottage Home subdivision will begin their comment period soon.

City Engineer Brantley Bain reported on a joint meeting between the parking garage and Front Street Pedestrian Plaza consulting firms to coordinate overlapping design elements.

He shared that a sewer line hole on West Street was successfully repaired using an epoxy balloon patch.

He updated the Council with confirmation that a new pump, Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) for the pump and a chlorine analyzer have been ordered for the City pool, with installation scheduled for April 7–9, supporting the targeted May 1st pool opening.

INFORMATION ITEMS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

12. February 2026 Finance Report

13. February 2026 Planning Commission Minutes

14. February 2026 Design Review Board Minutes

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no other business, Councilmember Thayer moved to adjourn the March 24, 2026 meeting of the Leavenworth City Council. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reister and passed unanimously.

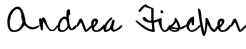
The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

APPROVED

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Carl J. Florea
Mayor

ATTEST

Signed by:

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Andrea Fischer
City Clerk