

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

April 14, 2026

Mayor Carl J. Florea called the April 14, 2026 Leavenworth City Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilmember Strand 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, Celeste Barry, Brantley Bain and Andrea Fischer.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of March 10, 2026 Study Session Minutes
3. Approval of March 10, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
4. 2026 Claims EFT & Checks 71909-71974 = \$542,080.67
5. March 2026 Payroll \$463,407.76
6. Noise Variance for Shera LLC (La Quinta Hawthorn Suites)

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

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Craig Sorenson – 1535 Alpanse Strasse, expressed concern about the City's spending priorities. He argued that two proposed government facility projects, a \$15 million renovation at the Osborn site and a proposed campus on the Chelan County PUD property with no cost estimate, were fundamentally at odds with the City's stated commitment to affordable housing. He urged the Council to pause both projects and consider whether those resources and lands could better serve working families through housing investment.

Todd Broadman, a Public Affairs Specialist with the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience, briefed the Council on available financial assistance following FEMA's April 7th disaster declaration for Washington State related to the December 2025 storm event. He noted that homeowners may apply for low-interest loans of up to \$500,000 at rates as low as 2.875% until June 10, and that small businesses have until January 7, 2027 to apply for loans of up to \$2,000,000 to address cash flow and physical damage losses. The City Administrator noted that this information had been shared regularly in city communications, and Councilmember Rob Eaton requested the updated fact sheet be distributed to the city and chamber.

Jori Delvo, a Leavenworth resident, echoed concerns about government spending and questioned the logic of expanding City facilities onto the former PUD property when the City already owns land adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant. She also raised concerns about high utility rates and the lack of metered sewer billing.

7. Public Hearing: Moratorium on Bed & Breakfast Conditional Use Permits

Mayor Florea opened the public hearing at 7:18 PM.

Senior Planner Celeste Barry presented the basis for a proposed six-month moratorium on the application and processing of conditional use permits for bed and breakfast (B&B) facilities. Key concerns included the conversion of structures built using City pre-approved plans into B&B operations, and a flawed calculation method for enforcing the 4% cap on B&Bs within City limits. Staff noted that B&B code amendments are not included in the 2026 planning docket, and that the primary focus this year is the mandated comprehensive plan update, making additional review time necessary.

No public testimony was offered.

Hearing no additional comments, Mayor Florea closed the public hearing at 7:21PM.

RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDERS AND OTHER BUSINESS

8. Resolution 07-2026 – Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Councilmember Hessburg moved to accept and approve Resolution 07-2026 – Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Bedard and passed unanimously.

9. Ordinance 1721 – Quarterly Budget Amendment

Councilmember Bedard moved to adopt Ordinance 1721 – Quarterly Budget Amendment. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Thayer and passed unanimously.

10. Ordinance 1722 – Moratorium on Bed & Breakfast Conditional Use Permits

Councilmember Thayer moved to adopt Ordinance 1722 – Six-Month Moratorium on the application and processing of Conditional Use Permits for Bed & Breakfast facilities. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Strand and passed unanimously.

11. Task Authorization 2026-04 – Ardurra Group – Blackbird Island Repair Bid Award

Councilmember Thayer moved to approve and authorize the Mayor to execute a Task Authorization 2026-04 with Ardurra Group for the Blackbird Island Repair in the amount of \$88,028.00. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hessburg and passed unanimously.

12. Task Authorization 2026-02 – RH2 Engineering – 2027 Water System Upgrade Project

Councilmember Bedard moved to approve and authorize the Mayor to execute a Task Authorization 2026-02 with RH2 Engineering, Inc. for the 2027 water system upgrade project in the amount of \$134,775.00. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reister and passed unanimously.

13. Well Fencing Bid Award

Councilmember Hessburg moved to accept the construction bid and authorize the Mayor to execute a contract with Faber Construction Corporation for the Water Treatment Plant and Well Site Fencing Improvements project in the amount of \$205,650.91 including Washington State sales tax. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reister and passed unanimously.

14. Professional Services Agreement – Amendment #3 – RH2 Engineering

Councilmember Hessburg moved to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign supplemental agreement No. 3 for \$105,560 to update the general sewer plan. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reister and passed unanimously.

15. Short Term Improvements to Front Street

Councilmember Hessburg moved to authorize the Mayor to execute a contract with a small works contractor for the Front Street Repairs Project in a not-to-exceed amount of \$250,000, including Washington State sales tax. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reister and passed unanimously.

16. Discussion: Senior/Disabled Utility Discounts

Finance Director Chantell Steiner led a discussion on updating the City's senior and disabled utility discount program, which has not been revised since 2018. Currently, 18 accounts are enrolled, 11 at the low-income threshold (below \$30,000 annual income, receiving a 50% discount) and 7 at the additional hardship threshold (below \$15,000, receiving a 75% discount). Research showed that comparable communities, including Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, and the PUD, set thresholds between \$40,000 and \$48,000, higher than Leavenworth's current limits.

The Council discussed the appropriate threshold levels, noting that Leavenworth's cost of living exceeds that of neighboring communities and that the federal poverty level has barely changed since 2018. The Council reached consensus to raise the thresholds to \$25,000 for the additional hardship tier and \$50,000 for the low-income tier.

The Council recommended indexing the thresholds to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in future rate and fee schedule updates, which Finance Director Steiner agreed.

The Council also discussed extending eligibility to renters, provided the utility account is in the renter's name. A resident, Ron Duncan, cautioned that extending the program to renters risks fraud and noted that renters are generally transient by nature, while the program was historically designed to protect long-term homeowners from being displaced. The Council acknowledged the concern but concluded that the senior and disabled qualification requirements, which include age or permanent disability verification and income documentation, would serve as sufficient safeguards.

The updated thresholds and renter eligibility language will be reflected in the rate and fee schedule to be presented at the next study session, with formal action anticipated at the first meeting in May.

Executive Session: RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) Pending Litigation

Councilmember Thayer moved to recess into executive session for 30 minutes under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) to discuss pending litigation with no action to follow. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Reister and passed unanimously.

The executive session commenced at 8:35 PM and the regular meeting reconvened at 9:05 PM.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Councilmember Strand's report was not recorded.

Councilmember Hessburg's report was not recorded.

Councilmember Reister's report was not recorded.

Councilmember McMaster's report was not recorded.

Councilmember Bedard's report was not recorded.

Councilmember Eaton attended the Parks & Public Works Committee meeting.

MAYOR/ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Mayor Carl Florea had no report.

City Administrator Selby reported there was a yard waste drop off event at the Cemetery on Saturday, April 11th. It was well attended and only five cars were turned away due to not living inside the Leavenworth City limits.

The recycling center survey has finished, and he is awaiting the results.

The fence outside of the Public Works building on Commercial Street and 14th Street was hit by a car and damaged. The car left its bumper with license plates attached at the scene making it easy for the Chelan County Sheriff to find the culprit.

Finance Director Chantell Steiner had no report.

Community Development Senior Planner Celeste Barry had no report.

Interim Public Works Director Brantley Bain announced there would be two bid-openings in the coming week. One for the KOA lift station project and one for the emergency generator project.

INFORMATION ITEMS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no other business, Councilmember Hessburg moved to adjourn the April 14, 2026 meeting of the Leavenworth City Council. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Thayer and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

APPROVED

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Carl Florea

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Carl J. Florea
Mayor

ATTEST

Signed by:

Andrea Fischer

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Andrea Fischer
City Clerk